DIRECTIONS FOR A GODLY LIFE:

Especially for Communicating at the LORDS TABLE.

Intended first for private use; now published for the good of those who desire the safety of their own Souls, and shall be pleased to make use thereof.

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The Eight Edition.

PSAL. 69. 33.

Seek ye after God and your souls shall live.

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B

TO THE HONOURABLE GENTLEMAN Mr. *LORENZO CARY*, Son to the R. Honourable Vicount *FAUKLAND* Lord Deputy of *Ireland*.

Worthy Sir,

SInce the time that it first pleased Your Honourable Father to commend you unto the Religious government of this Colledge, wherein you now live, your carriage hath been so sweet and lovely, that it hath won, I

dare ſay, the heart of each member thereof to a readineſſe of reſpecting this your goodneſſe, as in word ſo in deed, according to their ſeveral places and dignities. Neither could I ſuffer my ſelf, ſtanding in a more near relation than any of the reſt unto you, to come ſhort in the performance of this office; Wherefore I here offer unto your religious meditation his enſuing Treatiſe, collected and compoſed firſt for private uſe, but now publiſhed, not to gain the applauſe of any (from which my own unworthineſſe ſufficiently checks me) but chiefly for theſe two reſpects: firſt to teſtifie that love, which I both owe unto you and am ready to make good. Secondly,

ly and more principally, to invite you to a due conſideration of thoſe holy duties therein contained, that by a ſeaſonable knowledge of the ſame, your actions may be the more carefully ordered, and Gods name in the faithful practiſe thereof more fully glorified. The ſubject is a matter not of humane learning, but of Gods ſervice; and thereof a part without exception, the greateſt; the due receiving of the holy Communion. A duty, I confeſs, better known, than well conſidered; more often thought on, than ſincerely practiſed: if it were not ſo, bad actions would not be ſo commonly priviledged by the Greatneſſe of the Agents, as now they are; but they to whom

God hath given most honour here, would ever think it their greatest glorie to honour him most again by their faithful service unto him. And good reason why they should, if they remember that to whom God hath given most, of them he requireth most again; yea such who have the precedencie af others in place and dignity, may do well to consider, that, in making a conscience of matters of Religion and leading their lives according to the Rules thereof, they do not only provide well for the salvation of their own souls, but give a good occasion to others also, while they happily provoke them to the practise of the same duties by their good Examples: which

which are ever held as lively precepts, and ſerve for a ſecret reproof to an ingenuous inferiour, when he ſhall ſee himſelf defective in that, wherein his betters have gone before him. Let the Honourable and Mighty thus remember how far they ſhall honour God by a religious life, and then they cannot but acknowledge that it is their glorious freedom to be his humble Servants. Others, if they pleaſe, may take notice of this perſwaſion; and perhaps they would, if I were not unworthy to adviſe them: but now I ſpeak to you alone, whom I well know willing, as freely to make uſe of others help, ſo truly to accept of this from me. Your own happineſſe you muſt confeſs, with

with thanks to God, that by his providence you live in that Society, whose Religion is as firm as undefiled, where you cannot say, you want the rule either of loving precepts or example; according unto which you have already joyned with the rest in a religious communicating at the Lords Table. My desire is to perswade you to a constant perseverance in what you have so well begun; that so devoting your tender years, with those that follow, to the service of the Almighty, you may again from him receive and fully enjoy, his daily blessings, which doth ever attend on those that truly seek him. Some Meditations, which perhaps may serve for your directions, I here present unto

unto your view, in which I freely acknowledge almost nothing mine (to prevent the censure of curious Readers) but only the labour of composing; this I now commend to you, and you unto the blessed providence of the most Highest, resting ever

Yours truly

in the Lord:

HENRY TOZER.

DIRECTIONS
For
The due Receiving of
the Holy Communion.

Chap. I.

What a Sacrament is, and how many there be.

A Sacrament is an outward visible signe of an inward and invisible grace ordained by God, whereby he doth seal unto us his covenant

venant of grace made in the bloud of Christ, and we again testifie our faith and piety towards him: so that it is both a sign in respect of the thing signified, and a seal, in respect of the covenant sealed unto us. The word Sacrament doth properly signifie an oath, whereby Souldiers bound themselves unto their General; whence it is taken to signifie that obligation, whereby we tye our selves to the blessed and sweet service of Jesus Christ: for hereby we, as Christs Souldiers, first bind our selves by promise of obedience to fight under the Lords banner against the world, the flesh and the

the Devil; Secondly, we put on the cogniſance and Armes, the Colours and marks of Chriſt, by profeſſing our faith in him, that ſo it may appear unto the world to whom we do belong.

Now Sacraments are of two ſorts. Firſt, of the Old Teſtament, which were two. Firſt, Circumciſion; ſecondly, the Paſſeover. The firſt was ordained for a ſign of entrance into the Covenant: the ſecond for an aſſurance of confirmation of, and continuance in the ſame: both which are now aboliſhed, and in ſtead of them we now have the Sacraments of the New Teſtament, which are like-

likewiſe two. Firſt, Baptiſm anſwerable to Circumciſion; Secondly, the Lords Supper to the Paſſeover: both ſignified by that water and blood, which iſſued out of the ſide of Chriſt, when it was pierced by the Souldiers on the Croſſe. Of theſe the firſt is called the Sacrament of our Nativity or entrance, becauſe by it we are aſſured that we are received into the Covenant of Grace, and ſo are regenerate and belong to the flock of Chriſt: the ſecond is called the Sacrament of our growth and perſeverance, whereby we grow up in Chriſt, and are aſſured that we ſhall be ſtill kept in this eſtate.

eſtate. So that both are neceſſary; the one to aſſure us of our entrance into, and the other of our continuance in, the eſtate of Grace; for although that Grace once conferr'd cannot be loſt, yet our aſſurance doth often want ſtrengthning, by reaſon of our manifold temptations, againſt which we are comforted by the remembrance of Chriſts death and paſſion: which doth alſo teach us why the Sacrament of Baptiſm is received but once, and the Lords Supper often; becauſe our birth is ſignified by our Baptiſm, and we can be born but once; but we daily ſtand in need of food and

and ſtrengthning, and therefore we often receive the Supper of the Lord, that our ſouls may be nouriſhed unto life everlaſting.

CHAP. II.

What the Lords ſupper is.

THat we may rightly underſtand the Sacrament of the Lords Supper, we muſt know two things, 1. what it is: 2. what belongs to the due receiving of it.

For the Firſt: the Lords Supper is a Sacrament, conſiſting of Bread and Wine lawfully conſecrated and diſtributed; inſtituted by Chriſt him-

himſelf for a continual remembrance of the Death and Paſſion of Chriſt, and the benefits which we receive thereby.

This inſtitution was at Chriſts laſt Supper after he had eaten the Paſſeover with his Diſciples; ſo that it is called a Supper in reſpect of the time of the inſtitution; and the Lords Supper in reſpect of the Author, the Lord Chriſt: as alſo in reſpect of the end thereof, which is partly to ſet forth the Lords Death, and the ſpiritual food therein received, namely the body and bloud of Chriſt himſelf.

In this Sacrament we muſt con-

consider two things. 1. The parts. 2. The end.

The parts are two. First the outward Signs. Secondly, the Thing signified. The Signs are either representing, namely, the Elements themselves: or applying Signs, which are the actions about those Elements.

The Elements are two, Bread and Wine: not Bread only, but both; according to Christs institution: and that asunder, not the Bread dipt in the Wine, as some will have it; because Christs bloud was shed out of his body for our sins, and we are to receive these Signs as representing Christ, not whole, but

but wounded and pierced.

Now Christ chose these Elements before any other, because they best serve to set forth Christs Body and Bloud; for as Bread by diverse breakings and pressings comes to be perfect, yea the chiefest food of our bodies still giving a good relish, when other things do not, and is also more common to all, than any other: So the body of Christ by many torments was made the cheif nourishment of our souls, remaining alwaies most sweet and pleasant, and common to all that can receive him by Faith; and as Wine doth cherish and comfort us, satisfie our thirst,

purge

purge away many corrupt humours, and maketh us bold and adventurous: ſo the bloud of Chriſt revives and glads our drooping ſouls, ſatisfieth our ſpiritual thirſt, purgeth us from all our ſins, and makes us couragious againſt all fear of our enemy the Devil: Again, as Bread is made of many grains into one loaf, and Wine of many grapes into one cup: ſo we partaking thereof, and of Chriſt, by faith are made one with him as our head, and alſo one among our ſelves as members of his body; thus of the Elements.

The Actions in this Sacrament are of two ſorts, 1. of the Miniſter.

Miniſter. 2. of the Communicants. The Actions of the Miniſter are theſe.

1. Setting apart, and 2. bleſſing of the Elements, whereby is ſignified, that Chriſt Jeſus was ſet apart and ſanctified for us, as it is *John* 17. 19. 3. breaking and powring out, and 4. diſtributing to the Communicants; whereby is ſignified that Chriſts Body was crucified, and his Blood ſhed, and that the benefits thereof are offered unto us, if we have faith to receive them, as it is *John* 3: 15. *He was lifted up, that whoſoever believeth in him ſhould have life everlaſting.*

The Actions of the Communi-

municants are two.

1. Taking.
2. Eating and drinking.

By which is ſignified that they, which receive benefit by Chriſt, muſt receive him by faith applying his merits to their ewn ſouls, as *John* 1. 12. *As many as received him, to them he gave power to become the ſons of God, even to them which believe on his name.*

Thus of the ſigns; the thing ſignified is the Body and Bloud of Chriſt, with the benefits, which we receive thereby; namely the ſtrengthning and refreſhing of our ſouls in the remiſſion of our ſins: and this we receive, not of the Miniſter (for he gives

gives only the ſigns) but of God himſelf, apprehending the ſame by our faith; for Chriſt is not ſignifi'd in theſe ſigns as in a picture, but exhibited unto us; being himſelf preſent in the Sacrament, though not corporally to the Bread and Wine, yet ſpiritually to our faith; for though *his Body be in Heaven and muſt there remain until the laſt day*, as it is Acts 3. 2. yet we may feed on him ſpiritually by faith, by applying his death and paſſion unto our ſinful ſouls: ſo that there is one union between Chriſt and the Elements, which is Symbolical; and another between Chriſt and us, which is

is ſpiritual and real.

The ends of this Sacrament are twofold: 1. in reſpect of others: 2. in reſpect of our ſelves.

In reſpect of others, to teſtifie unto them that faith which we profeſſe; that ſo they ſeeing our readineſſe herein, may have their hearts alſo ſtirred up to ſuch good duties. In reſpect of our ſelves it concerns, either what we have received from, or what we are to return to God. In the firſt reſpect it ſerveth.

Firſt for remembrance; namely, of the death of Chriſt; for, *as often as we receive this, we ſhew the Lords death*

death till I come, 1 Cor. 11. 26.

Secondly, for confirmation unto us; and that, both of our union amongst our selves; as 1 Cor. 10. 17. *For we being many are one Bread and one Body, for we all partake of one Bread*: as also of our Communion with Christ; for as the Bread and Wine are turned into the substance of our bodies; so we by faith are united unto Christ, and made flesh of his flesh; for *his flesh is meat indeed, and his blood is drink indeed*, Joh. 9. 55. and for this cause it is called the Communion.

In the second respect concerning that which we are to return unto God, it serves

to teſtifie our thankfulneſs to God for his mercy in giving us his Son, and in him all things, and aſſuring us thereof, by this Seal: which we cannot but do, when we conſider the torments that he endured for our ſinnes, which were indeed the very nayles and ſpear that pierced him: and for this cauſe it is called the Euchariſt, becauſe in it we offer up our thanks unto God; and ſo alſo it may be called a Sacrifice, not that we do herein offer up Chriſt unto God, (for Chriſt himſelf at once finiſhed this offering of his Body on the Croſs) but becauſe we offer up our thankful hearts unto God for his mercy

mercy in Christ, so that it is a sacrifice, not of Christ but of our thankfulness.

CHAP. III.

The necessity of receiving the Lords Supper.

THat we may receive this Sacrament as we ought, we must consider two things, 1. the Necessity; 2. the right manner of receiving the same.

As for the first, we must know that it is not a thing indifferent for us to receive, or not to receive at our pleasure, but that we ought to do it (though not every Sabbath after the custome observed in the Primitive

Church, yet without fail, as often as occasion is offered, according to the example of those in the *Acts, who continued stedfast in breaking of bread*, Acts 2. 42.

The necessity of which duty will further appear, if we consider these two things. 1. the principal cause, which often keeps us from it; 2. the motives, which may draw us unto it.

First, that which makes us backward in the performane of it, is questionless the policy of our Arch-enemy, the Devil; who strives by all means to draw us away, either by a careless neglect of our cheifest good, to feed rather on our own foolish

fooliſh imaginations (as he did them in the Goſpel, who had rather *ſee their grounds, or prove their Oxen, than taſt of that Supper* to which they were invited, *Luke* 14. 18, 19.) or elſe by a timorous fearfulneſs of our own unworthineſs to approach unto ſo holy a banquet, as this is. And truly if we could but ſee that this is his doing, we would by all meanes ſtrive againſt his temptations; for, who amongſt us would not endeavour to the utmoſt, ſo far to reſiſt his temporal enemy, as that he ſhould not be able to hurt him either in body or in goods? and ſhall we be more careful for the preſervation

of earthly bodies, than of our heavenly ſouls, which Chriſt Jeſus hath redeemed by his precious blood? God forbid: we muſt know that GOD expects more at our hands, and that our ſouls are never ſo ſafe, as when they are in greateſt oppoſition, and do that which is moſt diſpleaſing unto our chiefeſt enemy, the Devil: for the more we pleaſe him, the leſs we pleaſe God, and the nearer we are to him, the farther we are from God.

The motives which may draw us to the performance of this duty, are taken from a due conſideration of theſe two things. 1. who it is which inviteth us unto it. 2. what

what be the conſequents of receiving or not receiving.

He which inviteth us, is God himſelf, whoſe ordinance it is; and who requires it at our hands as a principal part of his ſervice: and therefore as often as we omit it, we may be ſure that we offend him; which he himſelf teſtified in threatning to *cut off that ſoul from his people, which ſhould forbear to keep the Paſſeover, Numb.* 9. 13. and if ſo, then doubtleſs the neglect of this Sacrament, wherein Chriſt is ſo fully exhibited unto us, is very diſpleaſing unto him; which is alſo expreſt in the parable of the great Supper, *Luke* 14. 24. *None of theſe men which were*

bidden, shall taste of my Supper: Why? because they came not when they were invited; and if we refuse to come when the Lord calls, who knows whether he will give us life until the next invitation? let us therefore take the Lords offer, while it is to day, lest we be cut off before the morrow.

The next motive is taken from the consequents, and that 1. of not receiving. If we receive not, we offer a twofold injury; the one to Christ, the other to our selves.

To Christ 2. waies. 1. in contemning his ordinance, who commanded his Disciples to receive it, 1 *Cor.* 11.

24. and in them us. 2. in neglecting his love towards us; who (as a father on his deathbed) in the night that he was betrayed, bequeathed this seal and pledge of his love unto us, which therefore ought to be rihht dear unto us, and at no time neglected when it is offered.

Again, if we receive not, we injure our selves, and that also two waies. 1. in respect of our name and profession; for if we come not when others doe, we expose our selves to the censure of them, shewing that we are at least neglecters, if not contemners of GOD's Ordinance, *who will have all to come to it.* Mat. 26. 27. yea that we have not the

life of a Christian in us; for *whosoever eateth not the flesh of the Son of man, and drinketh not his blood, hath no life in him. Jo.6.53.* 2. we injure our selves from the benefits thereof, for the remembrance of Christs death and passion (if duly considered) cannot but be a great comfort unto us, which we put from us, as often as we omit the Lords Supper: and thus much we may assure our selves, that the devil will be ready to take the least occasion to suggest other meditations unto us: and what a miserable thing is it for us to be exercised in our own pleasures, or such like, when others, with whom we are bound to be present

are

are reverently gathered together, to the comfort of their own ſouls, to feed at the Lords Table? If we ſay that we are then exerciſed in other good duties, as reading the Word of God, or ſuch like, we muſt know that ſuch duties, (good in themſelves) are not acceptable to God at ſuch times: and who knowes, ſeeing that herein we neglect the Lords ordinance, how far he will give the divel leave to tempt us, and draw us away, even from thoſe duties alſo, to wicked imaginations?

2. The Conſequents of receiving cannot but invite us to a conſtant performance of this duty. Now theſe conſequents

ſequents reſpects either God, or our ſelves. That which reſpects God, is our duty of thankfulneſs and praiſe, which herein we offer unto him for his mercy: which is very pleaſant unto him, and neceſſary to be performed of us; becauſe *he is gratious, and his mercy endureth for ever towards them that fear him*: and now then can we but with *David, have our hearts ready to ſing and praiſe him with the beſt member that we have*, Pſal. 108. 1.

That, which reſpects our ſelves, is the benefit which we receive thereby: which is twofold. 1. General. 2. more ſpecial. The General benefits, which we receive by the

the Lords Supper, are chiefly two.

1. A supply of all our wants, which we shall be sure to have if we receive aright; for he, *which eateth the flesh of Christ, shall never hunger, and he, which drinketh his blood, shall never thirst*, as Christ himself hath promised: neither need we doubt of the truth hereof: for, *he is full of grace and truth*, Joh. 1.14. and *in him dwelleth all fulness*, Col. 1.19. and how then can we want any thing, if we possess him that hath all things?

2. An excellent rule to our whole life: for when we hereby consider Gods great love unto us, we cannot (if there be any love or fear of God

God in us) but be careful to avoyd any thing, which may be displeasing unto him: so that hereby our bodies are made more obedient unto our souls, and our souls unto God.

The special benefits, which we receive by the Lords Supper, is in regard of our faith: and this again respects either our selves and others, or else our selves alone.

The first is, a testifying of our faith unto others: for hereby we both shew unto others the faith, which we profess, and also by our example stir them up to the performance of the same duty: in this respect therefore it is necessary we should often receive.

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In the second respect it is a confirmation and increase of that faith, which we have in us: wherein we are to endeavour by all meanes to continue, as St. *Paul* taught the Disciples, *Acts* 14. 22. and beware that we fall not from our stedfastnes, but *grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ*: as it is 2. *Pet.* 3. 18. whereof we cannot but be careful, if we consider our weakness; for we are ever subject to Apostasie, and our faith is exceeding weak; as we may plainly see by our coldness in prayer and other good duties, by our fear of death, and by our love of this world: for the strengthning

ning of which, Christ hath left uno us this Sacrament, as a special meanes conducing thereunto: for the Covenant which our faith taketh hold of, as it is contained in the Word of GOD, so it is sealed unto us by this Sacrament: and therefore Christ calls the cup, *the Cup of the New Testament*, because it seals unto us the Covenant of GOD in the New Testament, accomplished in the shedding of Christs bloud. Now if a King should in pitty and compassion send a pardon under his Seal unto a poor distressed prisoner; would we not judge that prisoner unworthy of the benefit thereof, if he should either wil-

wilfully refuſe it, or careleſly neglect it? Queſtionleſſe we would: yet ſuch is our caſe before God, who, as King of Kings, hath ſealed unto us by this Sacrament a full remiſſion of all our ſins: if we therefore ſhall either wilfully contemn, or at our pleaſure receive this pledge of his love, what can we expect at Gods hands, but a juſt removal of this his favour from us? Surely if we joyn the conſideration of our own weakneſs, which ſo much needeth help, with the mediation of Gods mercy, who ſo freely giveth it, we cannot but acknowledge our own meſery, if we neglect it: wherefore as we fear him, and

and tender the good of our own ſouls, let us be carefull in the due performance of this ſo weighty a buſineſs. But ſome are wont to frame theſe excuſes for their abſence.

1. The often receiving of this Sacrament may breed a diſeſteem thereof; & therefore it is ſafer ſometimes to abſtain. To which I anſwer, that in matters temporal (as pleaſures, and ſuch like) the often uſe may breed contempt, or at leaſt neglect, as it often doth, but in ſpiritual things it rather breeds a greater deſire, becauſe the more we feel and know the goodneſs of them, the more we ſeek after them; yet if it ſo

ſo come to paſs, that by often receiving, we begin to undervalue the worth of it; we muſt conſider, that this neglect ariſeth not from the often uſe of the thing, but from our corrupt nature; for this Exerciſe is Gods own Ordinance; alwaies attended with his bleſſing, if rightly received; appointed as a meanes to ſtir up, and encreaſe our zeal and devotion, and therefore it is not likely that it ſhould hinder it. Let not this therefore keep us from the Lords Table, but let us rather come, that it may be a meanes to encreaſe our piety.

2. Some will ſay; I am not

not prepared, and therefore dare not come: but this indeed is no excuſe; for we muſt know that we ought to be alwaies prepared, our whole life ſhould be a continual preparation, as to all other good duties, ſo eſpecially to this; being *ever ready when the Lord ſhall call*, as our Saviour admoniſheth us, *Mat.* 24. 44.

3. Others will urge; I am to take a journey, or to be imployed in ſuch or ſuch a buſineſs; and therefore I cannot come: Well, if this journey or the like, muſt of neceſſity be performed; thy excuſe is the ſafer; but if it may be any way avoyded (as oftentimes it may) aſſure thy ſelf

ſelf, this is to prefer thy own pleaſure before that which God commands: a day will certainly come, wherein we muſt give an account for the neglect of the leaſt of Gods Ordinances; and then it will be ſaid of ſuch Pretences, *Who required theſe things at thy hands?*

4. Some are wont to urge; I am not in charity, by reaſon of ſome wrong which hath been offered to me, and therefore I ought not to come. This indeed is an excuſe too common: but we muſt know, that if we be not in Charity, it is our own fault; for we ought to be in Charity, and ſtill to preſerve it: and certainly a miſera-

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ble thing it is, that we ſhould *prefer to feed on our own malice rather than to eat of the Lords Supper*; this is to hurt our ſelves more than we need, even to wrong our ſelves becauſe others have wronged us; we ſhould rather ſeek all means of reconciliation, that ſo we may remove thoſe impediments of Piety and Religion, and come the more freely to the Lords Table.

5. Some thus plead for their abſence; I am afraid to approach unto the Lord's Table by reaſon of mine infirmities, which are in me, & therefore I had rather ſometimes to refrain, leſt I come unworthily, which is a very fear-

fearful thing. It is ſo indeed, but we muſt conſider, that our ſtaying away is no comfort unto us in this caſe, but rather a means to make us worſe, and to pull down Gods judgments upon us: we ſhould rather remember the goodneſs of God, that inviteth us, promiſing to *refreſh all thoſe that are heavy loaden with their ſins*, *Mat.* 11. 28. not putting us off for our infirmities: for *if there be a willing mind, he accepteth us according to that which we have, and not according to that which we have not.* 1. *Cor.* 8. 12. though we want that perfection, which others have; yet, if we have a true deſire to be refreſhed by the merits

rits of Christ, and have a sincere heart before God, he will accept us according to this. Whensoever therefore the devil shall tempt thee to draw thee away by the consideration of thy own infirmity, cheer up thy self with the comfort of the blind man in the Gospel, *Mark* 10. 49. *Be of good comfort behold he calleth thee*: say unto thy self; Christ Jesus hath invited me, and hath promised to accept me, if my heart be sincere, humble, and willing: why then should the consideration of my infirmities keep me from it?

9. Others thus reply: I desire to receive, but I am conscious unto my self of some

ſome crying ſinnes which I have committed before God, for which I have not yet ſufficiently repented; and how then can I partake of this holy banquet in the preſence of GOD? Is it ſo? art thou poor, and yet wilt thou refuſe Gold when it is offered unto thee? who will then pitty thee for thy poverty? art thou deſperately ſick, and wilt thou not ſeek unto the Phyſitian for meanes of recovery? who will then bemoan thee for thy diſeaſe? Behold, Chriſt Jeſus is the Phyſitian of thy ſoul; as well able to heal it of all it's diſeaſes, as he did the bodies of thoſe, which came unto him, of their infirmi-

ties: forſake not then this heavenly Phyſitian, but labour by a ſerious repentance to diſcharge thy conſcience of thoſe thy ſins, and then come ſpeedily unto him: it is the counſel of the Apoſtle, 1 *Cor.* 11. who biddeth us to *examine, and then eat*, not go away; firſt *examine, then eat of this Bread and drink of this Cup*: if thou ſay, I had rather ſtay till the next opportunity, that I may have the more time to repent; conſider that the longer thou ſtayeſt, the more ſins thou wilt run into, and then it will be ſo much the harder to repent as thou oughteſt: and beſides that, how doeſt thou know, whether God will give thee grace

grace and time to repent then or not? he hath promiſed indeed to have mercy upon a ſinner, at what time ſoever he ſhall repent; but he hath not promiſed to give him grace to repent when he will: Seek the Lord therefore while he offereth himſelf unto thee, that thou maiſt find mercy when thou ſeekeſt it.

Laſtly, ſome in a proud manner thus excuſe, (or rather juſtifie) their abſence. I do already ſufficiently believe whatſoever is propoſed in the Word of God; and therefore what need have I to receive this Sacrament ſo often, as a ſeal to confirm my faith? it doth no way confer grace unto me; and

my faith is ſo firm, that I perſwade my ſelf I need not a ſeal to ſtrengthen it ſo much as others do, whoſe faith is weaker; wherefore I think that I may ſometimes forbear. But know, O vain man which thus diſputeſt with thy God, that this is Gods Ordinance, a principal part of his ſervice, which therefore ought diligently to be performed, though it did no way profit us, even becauſe God had commanded it: yea, when we have done all thoſe things which are commanded us, we muſt ſay that *we are unprofitabl ſervants, we have done but that which was our duty to do*, Luke 17. 10. Beſides, is thy faith

ſo

ſo ſtrong that it needs no further ſtrengthening? doeſt thou not dayly perceive in thee a weakneſſe of underſtanding in matters of Piety and religion; a frailty in thy memory, and a continual diſorder in thy affections? if not, know thus much, that it is a miſery to want, but a greater miſery not to be ſenſible of our wants: and this alſo know for a certain truth, that when thou findeſt in thy ſelf either none, or at leaſtwiſe a ſmall deſire of hearing Gods Word and receiving the Sacraments, know, I ſay, that there is ſurely ſome ſin or other in thee not well repented of, which clogeth thy ſoul, that it can-

not delight in those spiritual exercises. Let us therefore indeavour to come to the Lords Table as often as we are invited; and when we do come, let us take heed that we come not for fashions sake, or to please men, or in any opinion of our own merit in this action; for this is not a celebration, but a prophanation of the Lords Ordinance; because herein we serve not God, but our selves; which is a fearful thing; for God is not as man, that he should be deceived; neither seeth he as man seeth, for man judgeth only according to the outward appearance, but God searcheth the very heart and reins; and will one

one day as certainly puniſh the prophaners of his ordinance, as the contemners thereof. Wherefore, as we ought in the firſt place to be fully perſwaded of the neceſſity; ſo ſhould we in the ſecond by all meanes labour to come to the knowledge of the right manner of receiving; which is the next thing to be conſidered.

CHAP IV.

The neceſſity of preparation.

HE which deſires to receive at the Lords Table in a right manner, muſt make conſcience of three duties,

which are neceſſarily to be performed,

1. A diligent preparation before.

2. A ſeaſonable Meditation in the time of receiving.

3. A religious Practiſe after the ſame in our lives and converſations.

In the firſt (as before in the matter of receiving) we muſt take notice of two things Firſt, The Neceſſity. Secondly, The right manner of Preparation.

The neceſſity will plainly appear, if we conſider theſe two things. Firſt in whoſe preſence it is, that we are to receive. Secondly, the danger which we bring on our

our ſelves by not being prepared.

As for the firſt, we are to ſit, and feed in the preſence of the Lord himſelf. Now if any, even the beſt of us, ſhould be invited by a King to his Princely Table, he would be careful to preſent himſelf (if he reverence his preſence) in the beſt manner that he could, putting on then eſpecially (if he have any better than other) his beſt apparel, and diſpoſing all things in the moſt decent order, that ſo he might be the better accepted: if ſo, with what fear and reverence ſhould we then approach unto the Table of this King of Kings, when he inviteth us?

who ſtand there ready, attended with his Angels to behold thoſe, which preſent themſelves; and will ſoon eſpy out that man, who ſhall dare to approach before him, not having on his wedding garment: and what can ſuch expect, but, with the man in the Goſpel, *a caſting out into utter darkneſs? Math.* 22. 13. Neither muſt we think to deceive the Lord with an hypocritical out-ſide; for he looketh not to the outward geſture only, but to the inward part of the ſoul: it is not ſo much a clean hand or curious attire which maketh us accepted of God, as a pure heart, and a cleanſed ſoul, adorned with faith and repentance.

rance; we may for a time deceive mortal men, ſuch as our ſelves: but when the ſecrets of our hearts ſhall be made manifeſt, then ſhall our hypocriſie, as well as our negligence, be laid open to our deſtruction. Let us therefore humble our ſelves before God, and prepare our ſelves aright, that we may eſcape the danger which will otherwiſe fall upon us; which is the ſecond thing to be conſidered in the Neceſſity of preparation. The danger of not being prepared is particularly ſet forth unto us by conſidering the offence, which we herein commit, and the reward thereof.

If we come unprepared, and

and ſo receive unworthily, our offence is no leſs than to be *guilty of the Body and Blood of Chriſt*, as St. *Paul* ſaith, 1 *Cor.* 11. 27. that is, we offer ſpecial diſgrace and indignity unto Chriſt, in not receiving him with that reverence which we ought: which offence, as it is in it ſelf very haynous, ſo it draws on us a fearful puniſhment; for the Propher *Jeremiah* hath pronounced him *accurſed that doth the work of the Lord deceitfully*, Jerem. 48. 10. and if it be ſo in other things, which are of leſs moment, what can we expect for the abuſing of this ſo weighty a matter? The Apoſtle ſetteth down at full the

the fearfulneſs hereof; when he ſaith, 1 *Cor.* 11. 29. that *he which eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh his own damnation*: than which what can be more terrible? Neither is the Scripture ſilent in ſhewing us the judgments of God upon ſuch offendors; as we may plainly ſee, both in the Old Teſtament, in the ſuddain death of *Uzza*, for raſh touching of the Ark: and alſo in the New, in the *binding hand and foot, for want of the wedding garment.* Wherefore let the danger hereof move us to a careful preparation, before we preſume to come unto the Lords Table. But ſome may ſay: I perſwade my

my ſelf, that I can by no meanes be worthy to receive this Sacrament, and how then can I receive worthily? it is true, if we truly conſider our own unworthineſſe and the excellency of this Sacrament, we cannot by any meanes become worthy thereof: but this muſt be our comfort, That he is truly worthy, whom God in mercy accepteth as worthy; and ſo he will us, if we come unto him in humility and reverence. Let us therefore, according to the Apoſtles rule, firſt *try and examine our ſelves, and then eat of this Supper*: which that we may the better do, we ought in the next place to take notice of the right

right manner of preparation.

CHAP. V.

Concerning Examination in general.

FOr our better performance of the duty of preparation, we muſt be careful to ſet aſide a convenient time before the Communion: wherein, laying aſide all other impediments, we ought ſeriouſly to be exerciſed in three duties. 1. A diligent examination of our fitneſſe, and worthineſſe to receive. 2. A comfortable premeditation of the benefits, which we are to receive. 3. Earneſt prayer

prayer unto God for a bleſſing upon our endeavour; that ſo we may be accepted to receive thoſe benefits.

In our examination we are to conſider, 1 To whom this duty belongs: 2. How it is to be performed.

The Firſt we learn from S. *Paul*, 1 *Cor.* 11.28. who biddeth *every man to try and examine himſelf:* ſo that we our ſelves are to examine our ſelves. Indeed the Miniſters of the word of God, and all ſuch, to whom God hath committed the charge and care of others, ought carefully to try and examine thoſe, which belong unto them; that ſo they may be more fit: and inferiours ought alſo willingly to ſubmit themſelves

ſelves unto their trial: yea, if it be not offered, to ſeek their help when they doubt of any thing; that ſo by their directions they may the more cheerfully go on. Theſe are duties, which God requires at the hands of all, the neglect whereof will one day fall heavy upon thoſe, which ſhall fail in the due performance thereof. Yet this is not ſufficient; for we are, for the moſt part, full of hypocriſie, ready to hide our ſins from others: yea we are ſo witty in iniquity, that we can behave our ſelves ſo ſmoothly, in reſpect of the outward ſhew, that others ſhall find no fault in us at all; though notwithſtanding our conſciences do all the while

while accuſe us of ſome ſins lurking within us: wherefore we are commanded alſo to try and examine every man himſelf in particular.

This Examination muſt be twofold. Firſt, General. Secondly, Particular. In the firſt we muſt examine our ſelves in theſe two things. 1. Whether we be in the number of the faithful or not: which is very needful to be conſidered, otherwiſe we partake in vain: for as our bodies can receive no nouriſhing and ſtrengthning from the food which we daily receive, unleſs they have ſome life in them before: ſo neither can our ſouls, if they be void of the life of grace, receive

receive any comfort by this ſpiritual food in the Lords Supper; which doth continue and encreaſe life, where it finds it: but work none, where there is none before. Let us therefore in the firſt place diligently try whether Chriſt be in us or not; of which we ſhall the more fully aſſure our ſelves, if we can find this perſwaſion in us, that we (as our fore-fathers were) *are ſtrangers and pilgrims here*, *Heb.* 11.13 *looking for a city* (*as Abraham* did) *which had foundations, whoſe builder & maker is God*; & that we are *made free from the bondage of ſin by the Son of God, Chriſt Jeſus, Joh.* 8. 26. and ſo with *David*, *put our whole*

whole truſt and rely only on his mercy, Pſal. 52.9,2. We are to make tryal of our readineſs, whether we be willing and have a deſire to partake of the Lords Supper or no. A willing mind God required of thoſe, which *offered any thing for the building of the Tabernacle*: as it is *Exod.* 25. 2. and of thoſe, *which offered any burnt offerings, Levit.* 19. 5. If ſo in theſe, which were but ſhaddows of things to come; much more doth he expect it at our hands in the performance of this duty, which is the ſubſtance it ſelf. Neither yet let us here deceive our ſelves, thinking that a a bare conſent and willing mind is ſufficient; it is

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an hungry desire and appetite, as well as a willingness to receive meat offered; yea that especially, which testifieth a good disposition in the Stomack: and God requireth in all his service, (therefore in this also) that *we serve him with all our heart, and with all our soul, Deut.* 10. 12. and *blessed are they, which hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled. Mat.* 5. 6. For want of this desire it is, that many, when they come to the Lords Table are never the better; because God, as he inviteth, so he feedeth none but those that *hunger and thirst, Isaiah* 55. 1. Let us therefore try and examine our selves whether

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we can say with *David*, *Psal.* 42. 1. *Like as the Hart desireth the water brooks; so longeth my soul after thee, O God: my soul is a thirst for God, yea even for the living God: when shall I come to appear before the presence of God?* If we can find this desire in us, then happy are we: if not, let us humble our selves before God and beseech him to work and stir up in us the good motions of his spirit, that so we may attain to some measure of this thirst, and from that go on farther to a particular examination of our fitness to receive.

CHAP.

Chap. VI.

The Examination of our Knowledge.

IN our particular Examination, (becauſe we are dull and ignorant in matters that concern our Salvation, and alſo have, and do often offend both God and our neighbours; all which are hinderances to the due performance of this duty) we muſt examine our ſelves in thoſe particulars, which concern both our information in matters which we ſhould underſtand; and our reconciliation with thoſe, whom we have offended.

That

That which concerns our informatien, is a good and wholesome knowledge of those things, which God hath revealed unto us; which is so necessary, that it is the very ground of all our service of God: for how can we do the will of God aright, if we know it not? *Surely that the soul be without knowledge, it is not good*, saith *Solomon*, *Prov.* 16. 2. and therefore *God will have all men to come to the knowledge of the truth*, 1. *Tim.* 2. 6. without which we can reap no comfort unto our selves in any thing that we do; but are as dead men: for *this* (and this only) *is life eternal, that we know God, and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent*, *Joh.*

Joh. 17. 3. So that without it there is no life: and hence it is that the Lord himself complains, *Hoſ.* 4. 6. *My people are periſhed for lack of knowledge*: and hence it comes to paſs, that many receive this Sacrament without any benefit unto themſelves, becauſe they are not able to diſcern of it aright. We ſhould therefore all our life long carefully exerciſe our ſelves in the Word of God, that ſo, when we ſhall come to examine our ſelves concerning our knowledge, we may the more eaſily, and with the greater comfort, try our fitneſs in this reſpect; whether we have attained to a competent meaſure of knowledge

in the grounds of Religion or not. Which that we may the better do, we are to make tryal of a twofold Knowledge, which we ought to have: The one concerning God, the other concerning Man.

Concerning God, we are to know, That there is but one, only wise and true God, subsisting in three Persons; the Father begetting the Son; the Son begotten of the Father; and the Holy Ghost proceeding from both: which is a Mystery far exceeding our understanding: yet so far are we to know and believe it, as God hath revealed it in his word: and therefore first are we to examine our selves con-

concerning this knowledge.

Concerning man we are to know, that he was first created in uprightness, *according to the Image of God*, Gen. 1. 17. but afterwards fell through disobedience, and was again recovered by the meritorious death of Christ Jesus. This we are to examine according to the two parts of the Word of God, the Law, and the Gospel.

In the first we shall plainly see what we are in our selves, even wretched and miserable sinners, corrupt children of disobedient parents, and that we have justly deserved death as a due reward for our manifold sins, both original and actual, being

carnal, sold under sin, by nature the Children of wrath, Ephes. 2. 3.

In the second we shall understand that we are in Christ, and what that Covenant is, which God hath made unto man in him, for the pardoning of their sins which return unto him by repentance, and apply the same unto themselves by faith. So that here we are to know two things: 1. The meanes of our redemption & reconciliation, the Death of Christ: *whom God in love sent into the world, to redeem them that were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption of Sons*, Gal. 4. 5. *and so hath delivered us from the power of dark-*

darkneſs, Coloſ. 1. 13.

2. The meanes, whereby we may apply this unto our ſelves: namely faith, which is a gift of God, begotten and increaſed by hearing the word, and receiving the Sacrament. Let us therefore ſeriouſly examine our ſelves, whether we have learned out of the Word of God our firſt innocency, which we had by Creation; our miſery, which we fell into by tranſgreſſion; and the happineſs, which we have obtained again by our ſweet and bleſſed redemption: for in thoſe things ought every one to be inſtructed, which approacheth unto the Lords Table.

Beſides this Knowledge

of God and man, we are further to have a particular knowledge of the Sacrament it ſelf: where we are to try, whether we do rightly diſcern the Elements from the Lords Body, and the true uſe of them: wherein we muſt conſider, that the Bread and Wine (in themſelves ordinary) being ordained of Chriſt, are now become holy, and whereas Chriſt bleſſed this Sacrament at the firſt inſtitution, we are to know that it is a bleſſed Sacrament: becauſe, whatſoever he bleſſed, is bleſſed, and that it will be a means of great bleſſing unto us, if rightly received; and whereas Chriſt gave the ſame after Supper,

Supper, we must further know, that it was not ordained to satisfie our bodily hunger; for, *if any man* thus hunger, Saint *Paul* tells him that he must *eat at home*, 1 *Cor.* 11. 34. but it was given for the refreshing of our wearied Souls by the commemoration or Christs death for us, and of our communion with him: but of this particular Knowledge of the Sacrament, more in the beginning of the first Chapter. In this, as in the former, we must diligently try and examine our selves, for, except we know all these things, we are not to partake at the Lords Table: because without it, whatsoever we do,

is but blind devotion.

CHAP. VII.
The Examination of our Repentance.

THus of our Information in matters which we ought to know. As for our Reconciliation, we are to examine our selves in those things which concern either God or our Neighbours, because we have and do often offend both.

Those which concern God are principally two. 1. Repentance, whereby we testifie our hearty sorrow for offending him, with a desire of amendment. 2. Faith, where-

whereby we take hold on his mercy, for the pardon and forgiveneſs of them.

Firſt, we are to try whether we have attained to a competent meaſure of Repentance. And indeed, if we truly look into our ſelves, and conſider that we muſt one day give an account for every idle word, we ſhall find matter enough for Repentance, if our hearts be not hardned in ſin. Now, that it is neceſſary to examine our ſelves herein, appears from this; becauſe without it we have no ground at all for any comfort in Chriſt Jeſus: for he, which is ſtuft with his ſins, is no more fit to receive Chriſt, than a glutted

ſtomack its meat: and again, *unto them that are defiled, there is nothing pure.* Tit. 1. 15. that is, if through unbelief, they remain in their pollutions; but *unto the pure all things are pure*; and *if we cleanſe our hands and purifie our hearts, and ſo draw nigh unto God, he will draw nigh unto us*, Jam. 4. 8. *as many as walk according to this rule, peace be upon them.* Gal. 6. 16. Let us then *ſearch and try our waies, and turn unto the Lord.* Lament. 3. 40. and put on *David's* reſolution before we come to the Lords Table; *I will waſh my hands in innocency, O Lord, and ſo will I go to thy Alter.* Pſal. 26. 6. In this examination of our Repentance

tance we muſt have reſpect both unto the time paſt and to come.

In reſpect of the time paſt we are to perform three duties.

1. Carefully ſearch our hearts to find out our own corruptions; that knowing them, we may the better avoid them, which is moſt neceſſary to be done, and that in the firſt place; becauſe it is impoſſible that he ſhould ſeek to go into the right way, which doth not firſt ſee his errour: and thus much we muſt know, that he that will not ſet his ſins before him here, to his converſion, ſhall have them ſet before him hereafter, to his confuſi-

on,

on, if we will needs cover and hide ſins, let us in love and charity cover the ſins of others, for *love covereth a multitude of ſin*, 1 Pet. 4.8. that is, layeth them not open before men to their diſgrace, who have committed them: as many do, who delight to hear other mens faults ript up to the quick, but cannot endure to hear of their own: we ſhould not ſo much exclaim againſt other mens ſins, but rather be humbled for our own, and lay them fully open before our ſelves, that ſo we may come to a more ſerious repentance for them. Which I think, we cannot but do (except we have more than ſtony hearts) when

when we consider the torments which Christ suffered for our sins; and see our own misery, what we are in our selves: for this must needs drive us unto God, as a desperate disease unto the Physitian; and make us utterly to accuse our selves and say, *Psal.* 51. 3. *I acknowledge my fault, and my sin is ever before me.*

Now the chiefest means, which we can use to come to the knowledge of our sins, are these two. 1. A continual meditation in the Word of God, wherein (as in a glass) we shall plainly see all our deformities. 2. A seasonable conference and conversation with such as are them-

themſelves touched with their ſins, both which are excellent meanes: and therefore we ought ſincerely to love the Word of God, becauſe it doth diſcover our ſins unto us; and diligently read, and exerciſe our ſelves in it, that ſo we may come to a full knowledge of it; and alſo heartily affect and love thoſe whom we ſee to be thus affected. When we have thus conſidered, that we ought, and how we may diſcover our ſinnes; let us examine our ſelves whether we have thus done in our life paſt or no, giving thanks to GOD that he hath at any time diſcovered ſuch or ſuch ſins unto us: if we find that we have

have not thus done (as God knows, we are all to ſlack herein) let us ſeaſonably repent us of this neglect; and be ſorry that we have no ſooner repented; deſiring God, that he will be pleaſed ever more and more to diſcover our ſinnes unto us, that ſo we may the better forſake them, and ſerve him, as we ought. Having thus unfolded our ſins before our eyes, let us in the ſecond place examine, how in ſorrow we have humbled our ſelves to God for them; for this is that, even our ſorrow, which muſt move God to compaſſion; and we know that God *is nigh unto them that are of a contrite heart, and will ſave*

ſuch

such as be of an humble spirit. Psal. 34. 18. And therefore *David* being pressed down with the burden of his sins, comforted himself in this saying: *The sacrifice of God is a troubled spirit, a broken and a contrite heart, O God, shalt thou not despise.* Psal. 51. 17. Whereas on the contrary, if we have no true sorrow, if our souls be not wounded within us for our sinnes, we cannot expect that either we, or our prayers should be accepted of God: or, that we shall with the Sacrament receive any comfort to our souls, if we come not to it with sorrow for our former transgressions.

Now there is a twofold sorrow

ſorrow: 1. Servile, when we are ſorry for our ſinnes (as ſome ſervants are when they have offended their Maſters) not becauſe we have ſinned againſt ſuch a Maſter, but becauſe we have thereby made our ſelves ſubject to the puniſhment due unto our offence: this is not that ſorrow which God expecteth of us: for it rather driveth us to deſpair, than to any pious meditations. 2. Filial, when (like natural children) we grieve for our ſinnes, not ſo much in reſpect of the puniſhment due unto us, as that we have ſinned againſt ſo merciful and loving a Father. This is that true ſorrow, with which we ought to

to be affected: which we may obtain two waies. First, by our ſelves. Secondly, by the help of others alſo.

By our ſelves, and ſo by the conſideration eſpecially of two things: Firſt, who it is that we have offended: even God himſelf, who in tender mercy towards us, gave his only begotten Son to dye for our ſins. The conſideration of which cannot but work in us a true ſorrow, that we ſhould offend ſo mercyful a God: for what ſon is there (if he have in him the affection of a ſon) but would grieve that he ſhould offend a Father, which hath been ever loving and

and kind unto him?

2. The grievousnes of our sins which we have committed; which will plainly appear, if we consider them either in respect of our selves, how deadly they wound the Conscience; or with reference to others, how infectious they have been to them, whom we have often drawn into the same faults, which we our selves have committed; and so have made them guilty of our sins, and our selves of theirs.

The next meanes to attain this sorrow, is the help of other men, who are themselves touched with a feeling in this kind; with whom we ought to accompany our selves

ſelves, and patiently to accept of their admonitions, ſtill accounting them our trueſt friends, which moſt faithfully and roundly puts us in mind of our faults. The hypocrite may eſteem ſuch as deſire thus to expreſs their love, buſie bodies, or the like: but *Davids* wiſh was, that *the Righteous might ſmite him friendly, and reprove him*, Pſ. 141. 5. and whoſoever is a ſound hearted Chriſtian will ever ſtrive to make the beſt uſe of ſuch, as he can. Let us therefore examine our ſelves, whether we have made good uſe of thoſe meanes or not: if we have not, we ought to humble our ſelves before God for this neglect alſo; earneſtly

earneſtly beſeeching him, that he will work in us true ſorrow for our ſinnes paſt, with a deſire of amendment. Whereunto, that we may the better move him, we are in the next place to lay open and confeſs our ſins to God, which is a third thing required in our Repentance. Confeſſion is ſo neceſſary, that without it we can expect no pardon at Gods hands, but rather ſome judgment or other; and therefore *Solomon* ſaith, *He that covereth his ſinnes ſhall not proſper, but who ſo confeſſeth and forſaketh them ſhall have mercy*: and Saint John perſwadeth us hereunto by the mercies of God, ſaying, *If we confeſs our ſins,*

ſins, he is faithful and juſt to forgive us our ſins, and to cleanſe us from all unrighteouſneſs. Joh. 1. 1, 9.

Now in our confeſſion we are to obſerve eſpecially three things. Firſt, what we are to confeſs. Secondly to whom. Thirdly how.

As for the firſt, there is a twofold confeſſion. 1. *Laudis*, or of Thankfulneſs; of which *David* ſpeaks, *Pſal.* 89. 1. *With my mouth will I ever be ſhewing thy truth; yea every day will I give thanks to thee and praiſe thy name.* Pſal. 145. 2. Which we are alſo daily to practiſe according to his example: but this is not that confeſſion which is ſo properly meant here in the matter of Repentance

trance. There is therefore another, called *Confeſſio fraudis*, a Confeſſion of ſin; and this we are to make, if we will truly repent: which ought to be, not of ſome ſins only, but of all, as far as we can call them to mind; and eſpecially of thoſe beloved and boſom ſins, to which we are moſt addicted: which that we may the better do, we ought daily to renew the memory of them in our ſelves; that ſo we may be the better able faithfully to confeſs the ſame, as often as occaſion requires.

2. We are to confeſs our ſins, not unto men or Angels, but unto God, who is the ſupream Judge of all.

There

There is indeed a time wherein we may make confession before men, either in publick, before a whole congregation by way of pennance, being by the Church thereunto commanded; or else in private, and that, either, for satisfaction to our neighbour, whom we have wronged; or for consolation, to the Minister, when our consciencies are troubled. But that confession, which is a part of our Repentance for our sins past against God, and wherein we desire full pardon for the same, we are to make to God alone: for he it is, who is offended, and he alone, that can forgive our sins.

3. Our Confession must not

not be of the heart only, but of the mouth also; for God who made both, expecteth to be honoured by both; and as both have been unclean before him; so they ought both also to acknowledge the same, that he may cleanse and purifie both them, and with them the whole man.

Again, our confession must proceed from a two-fold ground. 1. Hatred of sin, because by it we dishonour God. 2. Hope of Mercy, which is that we aime at in our confession; and it must further be qualified with sincerity, with shame and sorrow that we have offended so gracious a God, lest God reject us as hypocritical. Let

us therefore henceforth leave off censuring the faults of other men, and begin to aggravate our own; and especially before we presume to come to the Supper of the Lord: Let us take some time unto our selves wherein we may be most private; and shut our selves up in our Closets, and there humbly on our knees lay open before God those sinnes, which we have committed in our life past: and that fully and faithfully; neither diminishing the number of them, nor mincing the haynousnes of them, for God will not be mocked. These are things, which we are to perform in respect of the time past: as for the time

to

to come, we muſt know, that he which will truly repent, muſt not only turn from Evil, but alſo turn unto good; and therefore, having confeſſed our ſins paſt with ſorrow for them, we muſt (if we expect pardon) conſtantly purpoſe for ever after, by Gods grace, to amend and reform our lives; reſolving (as much as in us lieth) to avoid all occaſion, which may draw us into the like ſinnes again, and to make better uſe of thoſe means which God hath afforded us, than we have done heretofore; and that by ſo much the more, by how much we have offended ſo gracious a Father. But of this reſoluti-

on of amendment, more in the 12. Chap.

CHAP. VIII.

The Examination of our Faith.

THE Examination of our Faith, is that whereunto S. *Paul* exhorteth the *Corinthians*, saying, *Examine your selves, whether you be in the faith, or not*, 2 *Cor.* 13.5. The neceſſity whereof appeareth even from this, that *without faith we cannot pleaſe God in any thing we do*, *Heb.* 11. 26. much leſs in this weighty buſineſs: yea Faith is ſo neceſſary, that without it we do receive nothing at all, when

when we do recieve; for although with our bodily hands we receive the Bread and Wine; yet if we have not Faith, we want a hand to receive the Body and bloud of Ghriſt, and the comfort which thence ariſeth unto our ſouls: for how can we be perſwaded in our conſciences, that our receiving is acceptable unto God, and that the merits of Chriſt Jeſus belong unto us without Faith? It is impoſſible that we ſhould receive any more comfort than what we believe; and therefore our Saviour Chriſt ſaith, *He that believeth on me ſhall never thirſt*, *Joh.6.35.* Therein implying, that he which doth not believe in

him, shall ever thirst: yea, which is fearful, *he which believeth not, shall be damned, Mark* 16. 16.

Now that Faith which is here required of us, must not be only a general faith, whereby we believe that the Word of God is true, and that God is a just Judge; (for this the Devils themselves believe and tremble at it; and well they may, considering what is due to them, eternal condemnation) but we must go on further to a more special kind of Faith, and (which they cannot do) apply the merits of Christ, and the promises of God made therein, unto our Souls and Consciences; saying with *Job*, *chap.*

chap. 19. verſ. 25. I know that my Redeemer liveth: I know by the knowledge of Faith; or I believe; and not only the Redeemer of Man, but My Redeemer liveth.

Of which that we may the more fully perſwade our ſelves, we muſt believe; firſt, concerning our ſelves, that we are not able of our ſelves to do any thing that is acceptable and pleaſing in the ſight of God; *For we have nothing but what we have received of God*, as S. *Paul* teſtifieth, whether good gift, or ability of doing good.

2. Concerning the means of our Salvation, we muſt believe, that the merits of Chriſts death and Paſſion,

are alone ſufficient for our Redemption, without any merits at all, or ſatisfaction of ours.

3. Concerning God, we ought to believe, that if we truly repent us of our life paſt, conſtantly purpoſing to lead a new life hereafter, and ſincerely uſe thoſe good meanes, which he ſhall afford us, he will then be merciful unto us in accepting our indeavours, through the merits of Chriſt Jeſus.

4. Concerning the Sacrament, we ought to believe; that it is a meanes, ordained of God, to exhibite unto us Chriſt Jeſus with his merits, and a ſeal to confirm our Faith. If, upon conſidarati-

on

on of theſe particulars, we can be thus perſwaded of our own inſufficiently and unworthineſs, and that yet notwithſtanding upon our ſincere, humiliation and obedience, God will be merciful unto us; if we cannot only ſay in general that God is a merciful Father, and that Chriſt died for the redemption of Man; but every one of us in particular thus apply unto himſelf: I believe that God is my merciful Father, and Chriſt Jeſus died to redeem me as well as any other, all which I ſhall have plainly confirmed unto me in the receiving of this Sacrament, wherein, (I truſt) God will in mercy accept me

for Christs merits, though of my self I be unworthy: if (I say) we can find that we are not hypocritically, but sincerely, not verbally, but heartily, thus perswaded; then may we, having thus made peace with God by our Faith and Repentance, boldly approach unto the Lords Table.

CHAP IX.

The Examination of our Charity.

HAving Examined our selves in those former duties towards God, we are to goe on to another duty, which concerneth our neighbour:

bour; namely, charity: which is a free forgiving of those that have offended us, with a testification of the same, when occasion is offered: and a reconciliation of our selves to those, whom we also our selves have wronged.

That we may be the better perswaded unto a due performance of this duty, we are to observe two things.

1. The Motives hereunto.

2. The manner how it ought to be done.

The motives, which invite us to the necessity of it, are drawn from the consideration of these four things.

1. What we our selves have done unto others.

2. What

2. What harm we do unto our ſelves by not being in Charity.

3. What they are, with whom we are offended.

4. Whence ſuch wrongs as we receive, do primarily come.

As for the Firſt, we are conſcious unto our ſelves of a twofold offence, which we have committed.

1. Againſt other men, whom perhaps we have at ſome time or other more wronged, than they us, or at leaſt our conſciences can tell us, that we have been prone and ready thereunto, had we not been prevented: and how can he, which hath been forward to wrong others,

others, make the moſt of every wrong offered by others unto himſelf? We muſt here take notice of the adviſe of *Solomon* in another caſe. *Seek not*, ſaith he, *to have thy ſervant curſe thee: for oftentimes thy heart knoweth, that thou thy ſelfe haſt alſo curſed others*, *Eccleſ.* 7. 22. So alſo be not haſty to aggrevate the wrong which others have done unto thee; for thy heart can tell thee, that thou thy ſelf haſt alſo wronged others.

2. If this conſideration prevail not with us, let us conſider in the next place, that we have daily offended God farre more than any man can offend us: and can any

any of us expect any mercy from God in the forgivneſſe of our debts, if we ſhew none to others in paſſing by ſmall matters of offence? Small, I ſay, becauſe the greateſt are ſmall in reſpect of the offences which we have committed againſt God. Our Saviour Chriſt told his Diſciples plainly (and in them us) *Mark* 11. 25. *If ye do not forgive others their treſpaſſes, neither will your heavenly Father forgive you your treſpaſſes:* which was verified in the Parable of the cruel ſervant; who (becauſe he had no compaſſion on his fellow-ſervant, as his Lord had pitty on him) was *delivered to the tormentors, till he ſhould pay all that*

was

was due; with this application annexed, *ſo likewiſe ſhall my heavenly Father do alſo unto you, if ye from your hearts, forgive not every one his Brother their treſpaſſes*, Mat. 18. 34, 35. The conſideration whereof, I think, is able to move any good-hearted Chriſtian to love his brethren, though they have offended him.

The ſecond motive unto this duty is taken from the conſideration of the harm, that otherwiſe we bring upon our own ſouls; which indeed is greater, than either we can do unto others, or they unto us.

This harm is twofold; 1. General; namely, a ſtain to all the good which we have

have: for *though we speak with the tongue of Men and Angels*: though we have all other good gifts, as of *Prophesying, understanding of mysteries, &c. yet, if we have not Charity, we are nothing*, 1 *Cor.* 13. 1, 2. Let us not therefore boast of our learning and other good parts, as long as we are without Charity; for all is nothing; *no more than a sounding brass or a tinkling Cymbal.*

2. Particular: and so it is an hinderance, 1. To our Prayers, 2. To the right receiving of the Sacrament. The want of Charity is an hinderance to our Prayers in a twofold respect.

1. Because, without Charity

rity, we cannot expect to receive that which we pray for; for if we pray to God to forgive us our treſpaſſes, as we forgive them that treſpaſs againſt us, how ſhall we hope that God will forgive us, if we forgive not others, which is the condition of our Prayers? To pray for the one, and not to perform the other, is to mock God in our Prayers; or rather, miſerably to deceive our ſelves: for as many have not becauſe they ask not, ſo *many work and receive not, becauſe they ask amiſſe: Jam.* 4. 3. and ſuch are they which ask without Charity: and who knows how ſoon they may ſtand in need of Gods mercy?

2. It

2. It hinders our Prayers in this respect; because without Charity, we cannot joyn those, with whom we are at variance, with our selves in our Prayers: which is against the rule of our Saviour Christ, who biddeth us to pray, *Our Father*, and *give us our bread*; and so joyn others with our selves in every Petition: now how can we heartily pray thus for them, whom we love not? Our own Consciences can sufficiently tell us, that we cannot; yea, and that we often have been faulty herein. Wherefore, if we desire that our prayers should hence forth be effectual, let us follow the counsel, which S. *Peter*

Peter giveth to the Husband and Wife, 1 *Pet.* 3. 7. Which is, *to live together according to knowledge, bearing one with another, that our prayers be not hindered:* which if we do, our Prayers ſhall be much furthered, as Chriſt himſelf ſaith: *If two of you ſhall agree on earth, as touching the thing that they ſhall ask, it ſhall be done for them of my Father whis is in Heaven*, *Mat.* 18. 19.

The want of Charity is an hinderance to our due receiving of the Sacrament: becauſe the Sacrament is a Seal of our union and communion, as with Chriſt, ſo amongſt our ſelves; as Saint *Paul* ſaith, 1 *Cor.* 10. 16, 17.

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The cup of bleſſing which we bleſſe, is it not the Communion of the bloud of Chriſt? The bread which we break, is it not the Communion of the Body of Chriſt? For we, being many are one Bread and one Body, becauſe we partake of one Bread: So that, unleſs we be joyned together in love, we cannot be capable of thoſe benefits, which otherwiſe would ariſe unto our ſouls.

Again, Love is the very badge whereby we are known to be Chriſts Diſciples, *John* 13.35. *By this ſhall all men know that ye are my Diſciples, if ye love one another.* It is a part of that wedding-garment, wherewith every one ought to be cloathed, that

that comes to the Lords Table. Wherefore, if we desire to be accepted when we do come, and there to receive the benefits of Christs Death and Passion, let us put on the bowels of mercy and compassion.

A Third Motive unto this duty is taken from the consideration of the parties, with whom we are offended: they are Men, yea Christians as well as our selves; such for whom Christ died as well as for us. Shall we then think it hard to suffer some small wrong at their hands, for whom Christ thought it not too much to die? Can we perswade our selves, that there is the love of God in us, if we

we hate them whom he ſo loved? *every one, which loveth him that begat, loveth him alſo that is begotten of him,* 1 *Joh.* 5, 1. and whoſoever loveth him that did redeem, loveth him alſo that is redeemed by him.

The Fourth Motive unto this duty of Charity is taken from a ſerious conſideration of the firſt original, whence theſe wrongs proceed, which we receive.

And here we may take notice both of the Authour, and alſo of the Diſpoſer thereof. The firſt Author is not ſo much the party from whom we receive the wrong; as the grand-enemy of both us and them, the Devil, who well know-

knoweth, that *a houſe divided againſt it ſelf cannot ſtand*: and therefore ſtriveth by all means to ſet us at varience amongſt our ſelves, though ſometimes upon ſmall occaons; that ſo thereby hindering us from the performance of good dutie, (as the receiving of the Sacrament, and ſuch like) which are the meanes of our Salvation, he may the more eaſily tempt us to worſe imployments, while others are better exerciſed; and ſo make his ſide the ſtronger againſt us: and who knows what power it may pleaſe God to give him againſt us at ſuch times? Wherefore, as we love our own ſafety, let us ſeek to croſſe

croſſe him, who thus oppoſeth us by his temptations: and if we will needs be at ſtrife, let it be with him, who will never be at quiet with us, until he have gotten the upper hand of us: which we may the more eaſily perſwade our ſelves unto; if we have reſpect not ſo much to other mens wrongful actions, as to his wicked ſuggeſtions, the cauſe of all, and aſſure our ſelves, that, in putting up a wrong, we right our ſelves, and croſs him; which ſhould be our chiefeſt ayme.

Again, as the Devil is the Authour of our wrongs: ſo God, who is the Diſpoſer of all things, hath a hand in it:

it: who permitted the Devil thus far to provoke us: perhaps for the tryal of our constancy and patience, or for some other ends best known unto himself: and, if we could but see, that the finger of God is in our Crosses, we would patiently answer with *David*, Psalm 39. 10. *I will become dumb, and open not my mouth, because it is thy doing; and so commit our cause to him that he might make our righteousness clear*, Psal. 37. 6.

These are the cheifest Motives to perswade us to this duty of Love and Charity; to all which we may adde another, taken from the exceeding love of God to us, *who*

so loved us, without any love received first from us, *that he sent his Son to be a propitiation for our sinnes*, 1 John 4. 10. Whence the Apostle gathereth this powerful consequence: *If God so loved us, we aught also to love one another*, vers. 11. Which that we may the better do, let us in the next place see the manner how it ought to be performed.

Here we are to have respect both to the time past, and also to come.

As for the time past, either we have wronged others, or they us. If we have wronged others, we ought to perform two things.

1. Undo that which we have

have done, by making reſtitution as far as in us lyes: according to the example of *Zacheus*, *Luke* 19.8. who was willing to *reſtore fourfold whatſoever he had taken from any man by falſe accuſation*: ſuch ought we to be, ready to make good whatſoever we have taken from any man, and to give ſatisfaction for any wrong that we have done. Neither is it ſufficient to be willing thus to make ſatisfaction, when we are moved thereunto; but we muſt alſo in the ſecond place, ſeek peace with thoſe whom we have wronged, though we be not ark'd: which is the counſel of Chriſt himſelf. Mat. 5.23, 24. *If thou bring thy gift to the Alter, and there*

remembrest that thy brother hath ought against thee, leave thy gift before the Alter, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother: he saith not, stay till he come to thee; to be reconciled when he cometh, but go thou to him. And so *David* also adviseth us, *Psalm.*34. 14. *Seek peace and ensue it*: stay not till it be offered to, or required of thee; but seek it. But perhaps those (whom we have offended) are far off, and we cannot come near them; or near, and will not be reconciled to us, what shall we do in this case? Here we ought to use all means that we can, for the procuring of peace and quietness: but if

either

either occaſion or acceptance be denyed us, we muſt not doubt but that God will be pleaſed to accept of our deſire.

Now, if others have wronged us, we muſt (though perhaps it may ſeem ſomewhat hard) freely forgive them; loving even them that hate us, whereunto our Saviour Chriſt admoniſheth us in every Goſpel; ſaying, *If thy brother treſpaſs againſt thee ſeven times a day, thou ſhalt forgive him*, Luke 17. 4. And again, *I ſay unto you, love your enemies; bleſs them that curſe you*, Mat. 5.44. But ſome one may ſay, ſuch an one hath wronged me ſo much, that fleſh and bloud cannot take it.

it. It is true, if thou consult with flesh and blood, it will seem hard to bear the least wrong: but flesh is not a friend, whom we may safely consult but rather a bosom enemy, whom we ought to resist: if we ask counsel of CHRIST (whose counsel we ought, and may most safely follow) he will bid us go and be reconciled: and Saint *Paul* bids us to *feed our enimies, and to overcome evil with good*, Rom. 12. 21. and *Solomon* can tell us, that it *is the glory of a man to pass over a transgression*, Prov. 19. 11 As for revenge, it is not for us to meddle with it; because the Lord himself saith, *Deut.* 32. 35. *To me belongeth vengeance*

geance and recompence: and St. James will assure us, that *to have bitter envyings and strife in the heart, is wisdom which descendeth not from above; but is earthly, sensual, devilish: but that wisdom which is from above, is easie to be intreated, and full of mercy*, James 3.17. Wherefore let us grieve at such wrathful motions, assuring our selves that it is a point of heavenly wisdom to forbear; and certainly if we can but once find that God hath wrought in us a readiness to forgive those which have wronged us, and to pray for their conversion, we may esteem it an evident sign of Sanctification.

As for the time to come,

that we may the better preſerve the bond of Charity, we muſt reſolve carefully to obſerve theſe two ſorts of rules. 1. How we may keep peace with others. 2. How others may do the like with us.

As for the firſt, becauſe others may outwardly wrong us either in word or deed, that we may in both avoid diſcontent and ſtrife thereupon, we muſt propoſe unto our ſelves a twofold rule.

1. Concerning their words; which is the rule in *Solomon*, Prov. 7. 21. namely, *That we take no heed unto all words that are ſpoken*: for this is that, which often ſtirreth up ſtrife amongſt us, which otherwiſe might

might eaſily, and without any prejudice be avoided, if men were not too inquiſitive and ready to take notice of every thing that is ſpoken: and therefore we ſhould here not uncertain, but ſleight, yea reject ſuch men, who, under pretence of love unto us, will whiſper in our ears, and maliciouſly inform us againſt ſuch or ſuch an one, whom *Soloman* calleth *pick-thanks, whiſperers, tale-bearers, ſuch as will ſeperate cheif friends*, Prov. 16. 28. for occaſion of ſeparatinn may be given (if ſo takeh) between friends; as we often ſee that he, which is ſingularly affected to another, may haſtily ſpeak ſome reproachful

words of him; which perhaps he will presently be sorry for, and not speak the like again: yet this shall be enough for the breach of charity, if it be in the audience of a whisperer: who (to speak the truth) is a meer incendiary, that will ever be adding fuel to the fire of contention. Whence Saint *James* calls the tongue, *a fire, a world of iniquitie, that setteth on fire the whole course of Nature*, Jam. 3. 6.. And *Solomon* saith, that *without wood the fire is quenched; and without a tale-bearer, strife ceaseth*, Prov. 26. 20.

The Second rule, whereby we may keep peace with others, is concerning other mens

mens actions: which is that we ſo take them (though ſometimes wrongful) that we be not eaſily provoked thereby; for an haſty and furious diſcontent upon ſome ſmall occaſion, doth often break out to the breach of Charity; whereas a ſeaſonable deliberation would mitigate the matter, and ſo cover all in ſilence. And therefore Saint *Paul* telleth us, that *Charitie ſuffereth long, and is not eaſily provoked.* 1 Cor. 13. 4, 5. If we can but make true uſe of theſe two rules, we may eaſily, for our parts, live at peace with others. Secondly, we muſt endeavour that others alſo by our carriage may do the like with us: to

which

which purpose we must take away, first a common fault amongst us, which is a main cause of strife and enmity. 2. the occasion thereof:

The fault it self is railing, scandalous, and reproachful speaking: which is so frequent, that few or none (if we look narrowly into our words) but are conscious unto themselues hereof; but also haynous in it self, that Saint *Paul* ranketh it with robbery and extortion, 1 *Cor.* 6. 10. saying that *neither theeves, nor revilers, nor extortioners shall inherit the Kingdom of God*; and so pernitious also unto the sweet society of men; that it is that breath, which often blows the coals of contention

tention ſo far, that they cannot be quenched again without blood: and daily experience teacheth us, than there is no ſuch common cauſe of ſtrife and debate, as ſcandalous terms which are ſo often heard amongſt us; ſo that, if we can but avoid theſe, we ſhall take away the very ground upon which our wrongful actions are builded; and therefore Saint *James*, *beſeeching us* by the name of *Brethren*, exhorteth us *not to ſpeak evil one of another*, Jam. 4. 11. and Saint *Peter's* adviſe is, that *we lay aſide all evil ſpeakings, and as new born babes deſire the ſincere Milk of the Word*, 1 Pet. 2. 1.

Now, that our ſpaech of others

others may be such as it ought to be, let us follow the advice of *Solomon*, whose counsel is that *it be friendly*: Prov. 18.24. *A man that hath friends ought to shew himself friendly*: not uttering any thing that may tend to their disgrace; lest, by such discourtesies, he lose their good liking, but rather endeavour by fair, and courteous speeches, to knit their hearts faster unto him.

Neither yet can we easily avoid this fault, unless in the second place we take away the occasion of it; which is a tickling desire, that most men are affected with, to hear the faults of other men (though perhaps lesse than their own) laid

laid open and ſpoken againſt; which quickly begetteth a ſuſpition of their worth, and hereupon we too too readily build ſome calumious report or other. If it ſhall therefore happen at any time, that we hear the ſlips and errours of another, let us not be delighted therein, but rather ſeek to cover them; for *he that covereth a fault, ſeeketh love*, Prov. 17. 9. and not he which deſireth to have them laid open. This is that which we ought to do, both for the reſtoring and preſerving of Charity; wherein we muſt neceſſarily examine our ſelves before we come to partake with others at the Lords Table. If upon examination

we

we find any thing wanting, either that we are not in charity with others, or others with us; let us according to these rules seek by all means to make good what is wanting, and so come.

Chap. X.

Of Premeditation and Prayer.

THus of the first thing to be perform'd in our preparation, namely Examination of our own fitness to receive. The second is the Premeditation of the benefits, which we are to receive: which we must not omit, that we may the better be stirred

up

up to ſeek God, and to communicate at his Table with joy and gladneſs; for there is nothing which makes us more cold and backward in ſuch duties, than this, that we have not ſufficiently taſted how good the Lord is to thoſe that ſeek him; the conſideration whereof is alone able to move any man to a longing deſire after him. Wherefore, having ſearched into our own eſtate by a ſecond examination, leſt we ſhould yet fall back to a lukewarm careleſneſs of what we are to do, (to which the Devil will be ever ready to tempt us) and ſo become the more unfit to communicate at the Lords Table, either to

Gods

Gods glory or our own comfort, let us ever quicken our devotion with a seasonable premeditation before we come, of the benefits which we are to receive by coming. All which are comprehended in this one word Life, which we receive in the Lords Supper, by receiving Christ, who is *Life it self*, Joh. 14. 6.

Now the life of a Christian is either the life of Grace here, or of Glory hereafter.

The life of Grace (which we obtain in this Supper) consists of two things.

1. A happy freedom from a twofold evil: first, of sin; from which we are freed by the death of Christ: whose bloud

bloud (if we rely on him) will make our ſins (though as red as Scarlet) to become as white as wool.

2. Of puniſhment; from which Chriſt hath redeemed us by the ſhedding of his bloud; ſo that *there is no condemnation to them that are in Chriſt Jeſus*, Rom. 8.1. where we may boldly ſay, *who is he that condemneth? it is Chriſt that died: yea rather that is riſen again, who is even at the right hand of God making interceſſion for us*, ver. 34.

The Second thing is a comfortable enjoyment of a threefold good.

1. An inſeperable union both with Chriſt our head, *from whom nothing ſhall be able*

to

to seperate us, Rom. 8. 38. as also with our brethren and fellow-members in Love and Charity; which *David* accounted *A good and pleasant thing*, Psal. 133. 1.

2. A blessed strengthning of our faith, whereof this Sacrament is a sure seal (as before) whence it shall come to pass, that we shall be able to resist the temptations of the Devil, (who striveth by all meanes to make shipwrack of our faith and us) and reply with *David*, Ps. 16. 9. *I have set God alwaies before me, for he is on my right hand, therefore shall I not fall*: this is that which *will make our hearts glad, and our flesh to rest in hope*: as it is *verse* 10. which bring-

bringeth in a third good, and that not the leaſt, that God vouchſafeth to his people in this world, namely, Peace of conſcience.

This is that which we are moſt carefully to ſeek after, and which in the latter end, will be more worth unto us, than ten thouſand worlds of pleaſure which we can enjoy: and therefore *David*'s counſel is, *Keep innocency, and take heed unto the thing that is right, for that ſhall bring a man peace at the laſt*, Pſal. 37. 38. Now wherein can we better keep innnocency, than by being carefully and faithfully exerciſed in Gods ſerviſe? And what greater comfort of heart, and what greater

ter peace of conſcience can redound to a poor ſinful ſoul, than the full aſſurance of the forgiveneſs of his ſins, and his inſeparable union with Chriſt Jeſus? which we receive, if we recieve aright, by receiving the Sacrament. This is that, beſides which there is nothing in us which ſhall be able to ſtrengthen and comfort us againſt our Enemy the Devil, in the day of our departure hence; who will then be ſure to affright us with the vglineſs of our ſins (though now in policy he cover them) that ſo he may, if it be poſſible, drive us to deſpair of Gods mercy towards us: then (I ſay) by the help of a good

good conſcience, as *Samuel* reſolutely ſpake unto the Iſraelites, 1 *Sam.* 21. 3. ſaying *Behold, here I am; witneſs againſt me before the Lord, and before his annointed; whoſe Ox have I taken? whom have I defrauded? and I will reſtore it you:* ſo ſhall we be able to non-plus our calumniating enemy, and ſay, Behold, Satan, here I am, witneſs againſt me before the Lord: wherein have I done thoſe evil things which I ſhould not have done? wherein have I omitted thoſe good duties which I ſhould have done? when did I at any time deſpair of Gods mercy, or neglect the ſame? when did I prophane, or abuſe his holy Sabbaths?

Sabbaths? When did I contemn or neglect his word and Sacraments? here I am; witneſs againſt me: but my conſcience tells me to my comfort, that I have diligently, according to my power, performed what I ought, and therefore thou haſt no part in me. If we can thus clear our ſelves, then ſhall we be able to ſay with S. *Paul*, 2. Tim. 4. 7. 8. *The time of my departure is at hand, I have fought a good fight, I have finiſhed my courſe, I have kept the faith*: and that which followeth hereupon, is, *Henceforth is laid up for me a Crown of Righteouſneſs*. This Crown is that benefit, which we ſhall receive, after this life of grace is ended, in the life of

of glory. In the mean time, while we live here, we ſhall receive, though not this Crown actually, yet the full aſſurance thereof, believing with S. *Paul, that it is laid up for us, which the Lord the righteous Judge ſhall give us at the laſt day.*

Theſe are the benefits, which every true Communicant receiveth at the Lords Table: wherefore (as we deſire to receive theſe benefits, which paſs all underſtanding) let us carefully meditate thereon, that we may be inflamed with the deſire of them.

But becauſe all that we can do, is nothing without Gods bleſſing) we are in the

next place to pray to God, that he will be pleased to bless our endeavours, and to accept us in his Son, which is the third duty required of us in our Preparation: without the due performance of which, though otherwise we have diligently prepared our selves, we cannot expect to receive any comfort of soul with the Bread and Wine, because God only giveth that unto us, and he is debter unto no man: let us therefore seek unto him by prayer for a blessing, who is the giver of all blessings. This we ought to do first in private, setting aside some convenient times, wherein we may freely betake our selves to this duty: but

but aſpecially in the morning, when we are to receive, we ſhould riſe early and conſider what we are to do that day, namely, ſit at the Lords Table, and therefore be ſure that we conſecrate our ſelves to God by prayer and good meditations. Secondly in publick with the Congregation, where we ought to preſent our ſelves at the very beginning, that ſo we may joyn together in all things which we are to perform, and there at our firſt entrance pour forth unto God (as at all other times) this, or the like Prayer.

O Lord ſtrengthen me againſt the temptations of Satan, who ſtrives to draw away my heart

from thee; and accept the prayers which I shall now make unto thee through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Which done, joyn with the Congregation in such prayers as are then used.

In both we are carefully to consider two things.

1. For whom we ought to pray; and that is, not for our selves only, but others also, according to the Counsel of S. *James*, *chap. 4. v. 16. Pray one for another*, which we learn from the pattern of prayer, the Lords prayer, left unto us by Christ himself.

2. How we ought to pray; and that is, first in humility, with a feeling of our own wants, for which the poor Pub-

Publican was *rather justified* than the proud Pharisee for his vain boasting, *Luke* 18. 14. Secondly, in a setled and fervent devotion: when we pray, our minds ought not to be fixed on any thing else, (as many, God knows, are) for God will have the whole heart or none. 3. In Faith; with confidence that we shall receive what we ask; for *he which wavereth*, that is, not believeth, *Let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord*, *James* 1. 7. If we be deficient in any one of these conditions, we aske amiss, and so shall receive accordingly. Wherefore, as we desire to receive benefit, and comfort

by the Lords Supper, Let us ſeek unto God for it: and as we hope to have our prayers heard, let us pray both for our ſelves and others in true humility, ſervency, and devotion, and aſſured hope of obtaining.

CHAP. XI.

Of Meditation at the Lords Table.

HAving thus fitted our ſelves by examination of our eſtate, premeditation of the benefits, and prayer for a bleſſing, we may aſſure our ſelves that we have prepared our ſelves for the receiving of the Holy Communion, (though

(though by reaſon of our weakneſs, not in that meaſure) yet in that right manner as we ought: and ſo have performed the firſt duty required of us, namely, diligent preparation; whereupon we may boldly and cheerfully (otherwiſe not) preſent our ſelves unto the Lords Table: where we are to be exerciſed in a ſecond duty, namely, a ſeaſonable Meditation.

This Meditation muſt be threefold. 1. Before. 2. In the time of the Conſecration. 3. After the ſame, or, in the time of Receiving.

Before the Conſecration, when the Miniſter is going towards the Table, Meditate

on these two things. 1. Seing the Table spread, and the Elements set thereon, we are to consider, what place we are come unto; namely, the Table of the great King of Heaven and Earth: and that therefore we ought most carefully and reverently, to behave our selves, both in body, by a reverent and seemly gesture: and also in mind, laying aside all earthly cogitations whatsoever, and that in a twofold respect, 1. Because the place it self is holy, and therefore ought not to be profaned by any unseemly behaviour, for these must be laid aside, as God commanded, *Exod.* 3.5. *Put off thy Shoes from off thy feet,*

feet, for the place where thou ſtandeſt is holy ground. 2. Becauſe as the place is holy, ſo alſo God himſelf is there amongſt us, as he ſaith, *Mat.* 18. 20. *Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midſt of them.* He is in the midſt of us beholding not only our outward geſture, but our very hearts and affections; and ready both to reward thoſe that honour him by reverencing, and to puniſh all ſuch as diſhonour him by profaning and abuſing his holy ordinance: which we ſhall do if our carriage be not with fear and reverence.

2. When we hear the Miniſter ſay, *draw near and*

take this Sacramtnt, we must consider that God by his Minister freely inviteth us to his Table: then let every one lift up his heart by this or the like ejaculation.

Lord I am not worthy, by reason of my sins, to approach before thee: but seeing it hath pleased thee in mercy to call me, behold, in humility and obedience I come.

Then joyn in prayer with the Minister. In the time of the Consecration we ought seriously to settle our minds on the Elements, and the Actions about them, for the better stirring up of our devotion: and so meditate thus.

1. When we hear the Minister read the words of Christs In-

Institution, and see him take the Bread and Wine, we ought joyfully and thankfully to meditate on the great love of God, in setting a part his Son for the redemption of us his enemies, in the taking of these Elements, and setting them apart to be distributed unto us, as seals and pledges of the same: joyfully (I say) in respect of the benefit, which doth thereby come unto us, and thankfully in respect of God's love, which is greater than all the hearts of men joyn'd in one are able to expresse.

2. When we see the Bread broken, and the Wine poured out, we ought to be exercised in a twofold Meditation.

1. Of

1. Of comfort; considering that the Bread is broken, and the Wine is poured out, not only to be the more visible to the Communicants, but cheifly to represent unto us the crucifying of Christs Body, and the shedding of his Bloud for our sinnes: for *he was broken for our iniquities*, Is. 53. 5. By which is not meant that any bone of him was broken, but that he was crucified: whence we should every one of us gather this comfort, saying to our souls: *Christ Jesus was broken on the Cross, and suffered an accursed death for me, by whose merits, I trust, I shall escape the curse of that death, which is due for my sins unto me.* And here by the way

way we may take notice how the Papists do erre in delivering whole Cakes unto the Communicants, which represents Christ whole, not crucified, and so affords the less comfort.

2. Of sorrow, and that for our sins; the grievousness of which was such that they could not be satisfied for, without the pretious Bloud of *Christ Jesus:* these were the spears that pierced him to the Soul; that was that which drew his pretious Bloud from his side: and the consideration of this should breed in us a hearty sorrow, that we, so vile wretches as we are, should thus wound so loving a Redeemer: & certainly if we do not

not grieve for those sins, for which he hath so much smarted, we may justly fear that the stupid Earth, the hard Rock, and the dark Graves, which trembled, rent, and opened at his death, shall one day rise up in judgment against us and condemn us. When therefore we see the Bread broken, &c. let every one thus meditate: *O vile wretch that I am, that I by my sin, should thus wound my merciful and loving Redeemer!*

After the Consecration, when the Minister is receiving himself (considering that we are in the presence of God, who seeth our very hearts) we should pour out our souls unto him in this or the like soliloquie. O

O sweet Jesu, I do humbly acknowledge with the Centurian that I am not worthy, that thou shouldest enter under my roof, much less to come and sup and dwell with me: but seeing it is thy good pleasure to vouchsafe me this favour, cleanse me I beseech thee from my sins, that I may entertain thee in a pure and sanctified heart, strengthen my faith that I may fully relie on thy mercy, comfort me with thy blessed Spirit and so dwell with me for ever. Grant this O blessed Redeemer, for thy mercies sake, Amen.

Again, before we receive when the Minister is coming to distribute, and offers the Elements unto us (considering that Christ with all his

his benefits is offered unto us by God, as well as the Elements by the Minister) let every one meditate thus with himself: *Christ with the benefits of his death doth now come to sanctifie and comfort my sinful soul, in full assurance whereof I am to receive these signs and seals at the hand of his Minister*: And so as he stretcheth out his hand to receive these, let him lift up his soul in Faith with this or the like ejaculation. *Come Lord Jesus unto thy humble servant, as my trust is thou wilt.* This we are to do after the Consecration, before we receive.

After this in the act of receiving we are to perform these two things.

1. While

1. While we eat the Bread meditate every one thus.

Bleſſed Jeſu, I do heartily believe that thou waſt crucified on the Croſſe and that for me as well as for any other, and, as I now have received this Bread broken, whereby my body ſhall be nouriſhed: ſo I believe that I have alſo received ſpiritually thy body crucified with all the benefits thereof, the full pardon of all my ſins; and the ſtrengthning and refreſhing of my ſinful ſoul: this I believe, Lord help my unbelief for thy mercies ſake. Amen.

2. When we drink the Wine, and while we feel it in our ſtomack, we ſhould thus meditate.

Moſt bleſſed Redeemer, I do truly

truly believe that thy Bloud was shed out of thy Body as verily as I have received this Wine apart from the Bread, and that for the remission of my sins, as well as any others: and I do also beleive that with this Wine I have received thy precious blood, whereby my sins are fully washed away and my soul purified: and that according to thy promise, I shall never hunger nor thirst any more, because with this Bread and Wine I have receiv'd thy flesh, which is meat indeed, and thy Bloud, which is drink indeed; with which I humbly pray thee to cherish and nourish my poor soul, and to increase in me hearty love to these my fellow members, who have now participated with me, that so

we may ſerve thee as we ought; and that nothing may be able to ſeperate us from thy love, which I humbly beſeech thee to grant for thy mercies ſake. Amen.

CHAP. XII.

Of Practice.

THis is that, whereon we ought to meditate in the time of receiving: which being duly performed, we ought in the next place to take notice of a religious Practice of thoſe things, which are to be obſerved afterwards in our life and converſation.

Theſe things may be reduced to two heads: namely, ſuch

ſuch as we are to do, 1. in the Church. 2. at home.

In the Church we muſt perform two duties.

1. Having ended the former meditations, we ought each man in particular to give thanks unto God for his mercy, in this or the like form.

O Lord, I humbly bleſſe thy Holy Name, for that thou in mercy vouchſafed to accept me at this thy Table amongſt the reſt of thy elect and choſen people, and that thou haſt ſo graciouſly fed my languiſhing ſoul with the precious body and blood of Chriſt Jeſus. I confeſs, O Lord, that I am not worthy of the leaſt of thy favours: but ſeeing it hath pleaſed thee thus to

have

have mercy upon me; give me grace, I humbly beseech thee, to walk worthy of this thy mercy in newness of life, to the glorie of thy holy name, and the salvation of my sinful soul; even for thy mercies sake. Amen.

2. After this, every one ought to joyn with the Congregation in prayer & thanksgiving, praising God for his goodness, and so depart lovingly together with chearful hearts, that God hath so graciously entertained us his unworthy servants.

After we are come home, we are further to take notice of two duties.

1. Meditation, meditating seriously what comfort we have received by being at the

the Lords Table. Upon which consideration, if we find any good motions in our selves, any assurance of the forgivnes of our sinnes, we ought by all meanes to cherish the same, by the comfortable remembrance of Christs death and passion for us; and so much the more lift up our thankful hearts unto God for his mercy; as S. *Paul* sweetly exhorteth the *Colossians* saying, *as I have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him; rooted and built up in him, and established in the faith, abounding therein with thanksgiving*, Col. 2. 6, 7. And this is that which *Solomon* maketh a true note of a righteous man, that he will ever

ever be increasing those good gifts, which he hath in him: when he saith, *Prov.* 4. 18. *The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto perfect day.* When therefore we shall find a little faith, a little love in us (as God knows the best of us hath little enough) let us desire to increase it, and to have our corruptions diminished: for these desires are a beginning of Grace, and a sign of a heart well affected: and of this desire we cannot make a better trial, than by considering whether we long to receive again the next time, that so these good beginnings may be the more perfected.

But

But if we find not this comfort in us: let us ſearch into our ſelves, whether there be not ſome ſin in us as yet unrepented of, and whether we came not ſo well prepared to the Communion as we ſhould, if ſo, then ought we to humble our ſelves before God, with ſorrow for this our negligence: If we cannot ſee this in us, but that we came well prepared: then muſt we patiently wait the Lords leiſure, and pray earneſtly that he will give us the comfort of his ſpirit, with full aſſurance that he will grant our requeſt when it ſhall be beſt for us.

The ſecond duty, wherein we muſt be exerciſed at home

home, is a resolution or constant purpose of leading a new life, whereunto St. *Paul* earnestly inviteth us, *Rom.* 6. 19 saying, *As you have yeilded your members servants to uncleannesse, and unto iniquity, even so now yeild your members servants to righteousnes unto holynesse*: and why? *because being made free from sin, and become servants unto God, we have our fruit* (not unto sinne, but) *unto holynesse*, v. 22. Shall we then be made free from sin, and become the servants of GOD, and yet return unto sinne again? GOD forbid: if we do so, *we receive the grace of God in vain*: which Saint *Paul* be-

H seech-

beecheth the Corinthians to take heed of, 2. *Cor.* 6. 1. now what is it but to receive the Grace of God in vain, when after we have *escaped the pollutions of this world through the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, we are again intangled therewith*; and as the Sow to the mire, return to our former course of life again? S. *Peter* will assure us, that *it had been better never to have known the way of righteousness, than, after we have known it to turn from the holy commandement delivered unto us*, 2 Pet. 2. 21. And well were it, if this were duly considered of some, who think it sufficient to live precisely

cisely that day, in which they receive (though perhaps they can scarce do that) and presently afterwards live as prophanely and loosely as ever they did; but we must know that God expects a daily reformation of those, which present themselves at his Table; and, if we do not duly consider of it, we shall one day with fear and trembling acknowledge it, as S. *Paul* plainly tells the Hebrews, saying, *If we sin wilfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgement and fiery indignation.* Heb. 10. 26, 27.

Now that we may the better lead a new life before God, we must consider that to the direction of a Christian life, three things are to be known of us.

1. What we are to pray for.
2. What we ought to believe.
3. What we are to do,

The First being rightly known, affords us a perfect direction for our Hope: the second for our Faith: the third for our Piety.

Th first we have fully set down in the Lords Prayer, composed by Christ himself as a most exact rule for all our Prayers.

The

The ſecond in the Creed, which containeth the Articles of our Faith, contained in the Doctrine of the Apoſtles; called therefore the Apoſtles Creed.

The third in the Tenne Commandements, written by the finger of God himſelf, and revealed unto us in his holy Word, to be our direction both for our holineſſe towards God, and our Charity towards our neighbours.

Theſe three rules of our life (the Lords Prayer, the Creed, and the Ten Commandements) are daily repeated of thoſe of the meaner and more ſimple ſort, but yet (God knowes) not ſo well

well understood, as they should be, by divers to whom God hath given a greater measure of knowledge: never did our Land, yea almost every house, more freely abound with fruitful and comfortable expositiour upon these rules, than now they do: yet who looks so farre into them, as to know thereby the full extent of any of them? Some few indeed there are (whereof God increase the number) who make a conscionable use of those good meanes of Salvation: whereas others are well content, yea with delight desire to read (and that upon the best dayes) vain and ide discourses,

courſes, which are ſo farre from furthering us in the way of Salvation, as that (like Tares) they choak the Word of God, and hinder the growth thereof, as we too often ſee by our daily experience. There is indeed a time for all things; for pleaſure as well as profit: but ſhall we ſpend the beſt of our time, yea (as ſome doe moſt miſerably) the greateſt part of our time in ſuch vanities, and altogether neglect thoſe good helps for our direction; eſteeming them too plain and homely, or not pleaſant enough for our witty inventions, and acute judgments? Let ſuch know, that they, which thus neglect

their own goed, are guilty to themselves of a twofold crime.

1. Of unnaturall wrong unto their own souls, in stopping their eyes from beholding the light of salvation, which otherwise would shine unto them; dealing herein as injuriously with themselves, as Papist do with their deceived Laity, training them up in ignorance and blind devotion.

2. Of a twofold ingratitude: 1. towards those painfull Authours, which (like fruitfull lights) have spent themselves for the directing others, whose labours doe well deserve to be accepted amongst

amongſt us: and we ſhall prove our ſelves but unthankful members of the Church, wherein we live if we make not that good uſe of thoſe lights, for which tvey were intended.

Secondly, (which is the greateſt) we ſhew our ſelves unthankful towards GOD himſelf, who hath in mercy raiſed up ſuch meanes for the helping of our infirmities; whereof others, better deſerving than our ſelves, have been deſtitute. Having therefore ſuch helps ſo freely offered unto us, let us (if we deſire to live more righteouſly before God) uſe them more carefully than we have

done: endeavouring in the first place to know what is contained in each Petition of the Lords Prayer; that so, when we pray, we may know what that is, for which we pray; and secondly, for our Faith, to know the full extent of every Article thereof; that so we may truly understand what this is; which we confess we believe: and because both of these are little available, except our piety be such as it ought to be, let us especially be exercised in the Commandements of God; that thereby we may understand what we are commanded, and what forbidden. These are the direct courses

courſes which every true-hearted Chriſtian ought to take, and which will one day prove truly comfortable, when others, vain and frivolous, deceive us.

But becauſe our Piety and Religious beheaviour is the cheifeſt thing required on our part, unto the leading of a new life, let us further ſee what rules we may yet obſerve for the directing thereof.

This Piety of ours is ſeen in theſe two things. 1. Our Words. 2. Our Works and Actions

As for our Words, we ſhould follow the counſels of Saint *Paul* to the Epheſians, which

which is, that we avoid in our talk *all filthiness, all foolish talking and jestings which are not convenient.* Eph. 5. 4. and he giveth a very good reason for it. 1 *Cor.* 15. 33. *because evil communications corrupt good manners*; and that oftentimes both in the speaker and hearer. But some will say, what? must we never use any pleasant discourses? no jesting at all? yes, there is a time for that also; so it be according to the rule of Saint *Peter*, such *as God may thereby be glorified*, 1 Pet. 4. 11. other waies we may not: stir up our mindes we may to an honest chearfulness by civil and modest jesting; but ob-

obſcene and prophane, which Saint *Paul* calls filthineſs, vain and idle, which he termes fooliſh talking, and jeſting, which is not convenient; ſuch I ſay, *ought not to be once named amongſt us as becometh Saints*; for hereby both ſpeaker and hearer are often ſtirred up to looſe and vain geſtures, or at leaſtwiſe to conceive and think of them, and ſo Gods name is much diſhonoured. Miſerable it is to obſerve how frequently ſuch ſpeeches do paſs for currant under the aſſumed titles of merry diſcourſes: but let us remember what our Saviour Chriſt hath ſaid, *Mat.* 12. 36, 37. that *by our words*

we

we ſhall be juſtified, and by our words we ſhall be condemned, and that every idle word which we ſhall ſpeak, we ſhall give an account thereof in the day of judgment: Muſt we give an account of our words, and ſhall we not then be careful of them? Muſt we anſwer for every idle word, and ſhall we fill up our diſcourſes with Blaſphemies, with Obſcene and ſcurrilous jeſtings? if we muſt give an account of them, certainly theſe will lye heavy upon us: Wherefore let us rather with *David*, ſet *a watch before our mouth, and bridle up our lips, that we offend not with our tongue*: let us be careful that our words be ſuch

ſuch, as *Solomon* commandeth *Prov.* 25. 11. *Fitly ſpoken, which are like Apples of gold in pictures of ſilver*; that is, ſuch words, as contain wholeſome matter, and are ſpoken in a comely and decent manner, are as acceptable and pleaſant to the eare of a judicious hearer, as a ſilver picture, adorned with golden apples, are unto the eye of the beholder.

For our Works, we muſt as S. *Paul* counſelleth *walk as children of the light, ever proving what is acceptable unto the Lord*, Eph. 5. 8, 10. *Having our converſation honeſt among men, that they ſeeing our good works, may glorify God thereby.*

How

How to direct both our Words and Actions aright, we muſt cheifly obſerve theſe two things 1. How to avoid that which is evil in both. 2. How to ſeek and obtain that which is good.

To avoid that which is evil, four rules are eſpecialy to be obſerved.

The Firſt concerns the beginnigs of evil; namely, that we watch and pray, according to our Saviours counſell and practice, *Mat.* 26. 41. *Leſt we enter into temptation*, and ſo be drawn away to ſinne againſt God; for of our ſelves we are prone thereunto, and unable to avoid it: and if it go ſo far that we be once

once tempted to ſin, and feel in us any motion thereunto, we ſhould endeavour to reſiſt this temptation in the beginning, and reaſon thus with our ſelves; Did not I lately receive the Sacrament of the Lords Supper, where I had a full pardon of all my ſinnes (paſt ſealed unto me, and where I vowed and promiſed to lead a new life before God, how then can I do this thing, and break my promiſe with God? I have put off my coat of ſinne, and therefore I may not (I will not) put it on again: thus ought we to reſiſt temptations at the firſt, leſt they get the dominion over us.

The

The second rule concerns the occasion of evil, which we must necessarily avoid, if we desire to avoid the evil it self.

The occasions are diverse, but especially these two.

1. Idleness, from which proceed many (and these sometimes haynous and crying) sinnes; which the Son of *Syrach* calleth therefore *the teacher of much evil*, Eccles. 33.27. To avoid this, we must be careful to imploy our selves diligently in that vocation wherein God hath placed us; for otherwise the Devil will be sure to take an occasion to tempt even the best of us; as we see in *David*, who

who was a man after Gods own heart; and yet, when he was walking on the roof of his house (while *Joab* and the rest were in the battle) he was tempted to commit adultery with *Bathsheba* the wife of *Uriah*, 2 *Sam.* 11. 2. And how many do we daily see drawn away to lasciviousness, drunkenness, and such like vices by this occasion? Let us therefore carefully exercise our selves in our Vocation, that the Divel may not have an oppertunity to set upon us.

2. Bad Company, than which nothing almost is more forceable to draw us away to that which is evil:

Let *Joseph* but live in *Pharaohs* Court, and he shall soon learn to swear by the life of *Pharaoh*, Gen. 42. 15. and *if Israel abide in Shittim, the people will soon commit whoredome with the daughters of Moab*, *Num.* 25. 1. wherefore God commandeth his people to *go out of Babylon, lest they be partakers of their sins*, *Rev.* 18. 4. And often are we partakers of other mens sins, by frequenting their society; yea, (which is miserable to observe) diverse of ingenuous disposition and civil behaviour, have by degrees bin drawn away to looseneſſe and riot, by associating themselves unfortunately with vain

vain and diſſolute perſons. And we may herein obſerve the policy of our enemy the Devil; who, when he findeth any man well diſpoſed of himſelf, and not ready to yeild to others temptations, will beſet him (if he can poſſibly) with this ſnare, that ſo he may either by the wicked perſwaſions, or bad examples of others, ſteal away his heart, and allure him to that which is evil, which ſhould be a forcible Caveat unto us, to make us heedfull what company we fall into, and with whom we acquaint our ſelves, if we have any care of our ſouls: ſeaſonable is the counſel of *Solomon* herein, who

who adviseth us, 1. Concerning the examples of others, not to conform our selves unto them *by walking in their waies, but to avoid and pass away*, Prov. 4. 15, 2. Concerning their allurements, by no meanes to harken unto them; *if sinners intice thee, consent thou not*, Prov. 1. 10. If they say, come let us take our pleasure in this or that sort, let us goe to such a place, where we may freely doe what we will: *If they thus draw thee, walk not in the way with them, refrain thy foot from their paths.* 3. As for familiarity with others, he adviseth us to *make no friendship with an angry man, and with a furious*

furious man not to go. Why? *leſt you learn his way, and get a ſnare unto thy ſoul.* Prov. 22. 24. 25. Wilt thou avoid Gameing, Swearing, &c. then ſhun that company wherein thoſe vices are practiſed, or elſe thou wilt rather encreaſe them in thee. But ſome will ſay, ſuch an one is my familiar friend, and ſhall I leave him? that will be taken unkindly; ſhall I get my ſelf diſcredit, where I may avoid it? Yes, be he never ſo near unto thee, yet if he in his courſes forſake God, forſake thou him, leſt God forſake thee: yea thou mayeſt therein ſhew thy ſelf a very friend to him, in winning him from his

his evil waies by thy forſaking of him; for ſo ſaith Saint *Paul*, 2 Theſ. 3. 14. *If any man obey not our word, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be aſhamed*: It may be when he ſeeth thee leave him, he will begin to think of his bad life, and ſo be aſhamed of it, and by degrees leave it; therefore leave bad campany for their ſakes alſo, as well as thine own.

The third Rule is, how we may reſtrain our ſelves when we are about to undertake any ſinful action: and that is by ſetting before our eyes this Caveat, *God ſees: for his eyes are over all*, Prov. 15. 3. & therefore whatſoever we do, we

we ſhould conſider that we do it in his preſence: which, being conſcionably conſidered, cannot but breed in us both reverence and watchfulneſs, reverence in reſpect of his Majeſty: watchfulneſs, in reſpect of his all-ſeeing Eye, that we offend him not, who will eſpye in us the leaſt fault, be it never ſo ſecretly kept from the world.

Again, conſider how mercyful *God* hath ever been unto thee, in delivering thee from this or that danger, this or that ſin, whereinto thou muſt neceſſarily have fallen, if he had not upheld thee: & then anſwer the Devil when he tempteth thee as *Joſeph* did his wicked Miſtriſs; *how can I do this wickedneſs, and ſin*

against my God? God hath been thus and thus merciful unto me, and shall I yet offend him and provoke him to anger? God forbid.

The Fourth Rule is for our direction, when we are fallen into any sin, which is this: When we are overtaken with any sin (as who is not every day?) we should presently lament it, and not suffer it to go on any farther, lest it come to a custome, and so stick fast in us: this is a difference which *Solomon* putteth between the Righteous and the Wicked. *Prov.* 24. 16. *A just man,* saith he, *falleth seven times and riseth up again, but the wicked shall fall into mischeif*: the just man, though he

he fall into any ſinne, riſeth again by repentance, but the wicked ſinketh deeper down, even to the pit of deſtruction.

Theſe are the cheifeſt rules to be obſerved for the avoiding of that which is evil.

The next thing, which we muſt look into, is, how we may obtain that which is good: Here we muſt principally obſerve theſe two things. 1. Make uſe of all occaſions thereunto. 2. Make conſcience of every good duty. As for the firſt, we muſt firſt, according to the example of S. *Paul*, Phil. 3. 14. *uſe all diligence that we may preſs towards the mark*, ſtill endeavouring to be better: and when we find our ſelves deficient in

the performance of any good duty (as God knows we are in all) we ſhould do the ſame again, and endeavour to perform it more fervently, that ſo we may come to a greater meaſure of Goodneſs. Again, we ſhould gladly embrace the company of good men, that by their example and adviſe we may be brought to a ſenſe and feeling of thoſe ſins which we commit; counting it a great bleſſing of God, if thereby we at any time be croſs'd in thoſe ſins, to which we are moſt addicted, as gameing, *&c.* and ever eſteem beſt of that company, not where our ears may be filled with prophane jeſtings, or tickled with ſuperfluous conceits; but where our cor-

corruptions may be moſt roundly reproved; eſteeming them our beſt friends, that will moſt plainly and faithfully put us in mind of our errours; which is the counſel of S. *Paul* to the *Theſſalonians*, *I beſeech you* (ſaith he, 1 *Theſs.* 5. 12,13.) *to know them which labour amongſt you, and are over you in the Lord and admoniſh you, and to eſteem them very highly in love for their works ſake*: which may be our direction for eſteeming both of our familiar friends, and of our teachers; both which (if faithful) labour for our good in the Lord by admoniſhing us, and both thereby deſerve from us a true regard as a recompence of this their love:

therefore if any man desire to be furthered in good duties let him testifie it by loving such men.

2. If we desire to obtain that which is good, we must be careful that we make conscience (as of avoiding every evil) so of doing every good duty, be it never so little, *endeavouring* with St. Paul *to have alwaie, a conscience void of offence towards God and men:* Acts 24. 16. and labouring to keep not only some, but all *Gods* Commandements, according to *Davids* wish, *Psal.* 119. 5, 6. *O that my waies were made so direct, that I might keep thy Statutes, so shall I not be confounded, while I have respect to all thy Commandements:*

Let

Let us not deceive our ſelvss in thinking it ſuffiicient, that we obſerve the Sabbath, and that we offend not God by ſwearing, ſtealing, or ſuch like hainous offences: and yet in the mean time make no onſcience of a lye for our commodity, or of vain and idle diſcourſes for delight, for if we thus do, it is certainly an argument of a bad heart.

But ſome perhaps will ſay, If I thus endeavour to carry my ſelf in all things, if I now and then, do not give a little way, I ſhall be accounted too preciſe and curious in matters which I need not. Be it ſo, yet be willing to undergo that cenſure, and eſteem it ſafer to offend ungodly men by thy good life, than a righteous

God by thy bad life: and though others account it too much preciſeneſs, yet do thou not ſo: but rather conſider that *God* commandeth us to *keep his precepts diligentlie*, Pſal. 119. 4. If diligently, then certainly there is nothing in his precepts ſuperfluous; nothing, which we may do or not do, but every one, though of never ſo ſmall matter is to be performed of us: whoſoever therefore ſhall endeavour to his power to keep the Commandements of *God* in every thing, is ſo far from being too preciſe, that he doth but what he is commanded.

To theſe Rules, for avoyding of evil, and ſeeking of good, we may adde one more, as the rule of all the reſt, and of

of our whole life, and that is the Word of *God*, which alone is able to direct us in the way to ſalvation, as *David* teſtifieth, *Pſal.* 119. 9. *Wherewith ſhall a young man cleanſe his way? even by ruling himſelf after thy Word*: Wherefore let us carefully read, meditate and confer about this Word, and that often; accounting (as well we may) every day loſt, wherein we learn not ſomething out of it, ever deſiring more & more to be inſtructed therein, and account it a great bleſſing of *God*, that we have the uſe of it ſo freely to direct us in the way of ſalvation. Neither let any man think himſelf ſo learned, that he needeth no farther inſtruction; for the beſt of us comes ſhort of

David

David, and yet he prayed ſtill to *be inſtructed in the Word of the Lord*, as we may ſee throughout the 119. *Pſalm*, Again, if we did know more than we do, yet we are dull in the performance of what we know; and therefore we have need to read the ſame again and again, to ſtir us up to a daily practice hereof: But that we may ſo uſe the Word of God, as that it may be unto us the ſavour of life unto life; let us at all times, when we are about to read it, lift up our hearts to GOD by prayer, that he may give a bleſſing to our endeavours, without which whatſoever we do in this, or any other thing, it will be ſo far from being profitable unto us, as that it will

will rather prove our ruine in the end.

He, which ſhall thus ſet his heart to ſerve the Lord by denying ungodlyneſs and worldly luſts, by living honeſtly, righteouſly, and ſoberly in this preſent world; he, which ſhall thus carefully receive the Sacrament in a right manner, and hear the Word with diligence devoting himſelf to God by prayer in all things, which he doth: he which ſhall thus make conſcience of his waies, in every thing; the bleſſing of *God* reſt upon him, as it needs muſt, and that peace of conſcience, (which no man knoweth but he that enjoys) ever attend him here, and everlaſting peace, and happineſſe crown him hereafter. *Amen.*

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